



New device for perfect surgery

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Still, further research is needed to determine whether placement of these chips in surgical sponges and other operating room materials will be cost effective for a problem that occurs once in every 10,000 procedures, Reuters reports.

Researches said the size of the chips used - 20mm - was too large and would need to be reduced to be practical on sponges and surgical instruments, Independent Online reports.

Alex Macario, a surgery and professor of anaesthesia who led the study, said the future probably will see a combination of tags and other techniques such as counting instruments and sponges before and after an operation.

"This is a very nice proof-of-concept," says Atul Gawande, a surgeon at Brigham Women's Hospital in Boston and at the Harvard School of Public Health. The RFID technique is very fast, he adds, but unless the RFID tags are very cheap, it could prove expensive--the U.S. uses about 2 billion surgical sponges a year. The RFID sponges are being developed by ClearCount Medical Solutions, which hopes to make the technology available in the fall, according to Science Now.

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