

THE SCOTSMAN

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## Wand could save surgery leftovers

SCIENTISTS have developed a "magic wand" to stop surgeons leaving foreign objects inside their patients.

Past research has suggested that one in 10,000 surgical procedures end with something being wrongly left inside the patient. In two-thirds of cases these were surgical sponges.

It is a problem which could lead to serious infection and death. Now researchers have developed a handheld wand which scans a patient's body before they are sewn up. It works by detecting surgical sponges which have been tagged with radiofrequency ID chips.

Researchers from Stanford University School of Medicine in California tested the battery-powered device on eight patients.

The wand was able to find the tagged sponges in less than three seconds.

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### Comments

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How about a low-tech approach - tie the surgical sponges to something big with sterilised string!

Or perhaps the "problem" would disappear if surgeons faced huge fines if they do anything so negligent in the future?

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