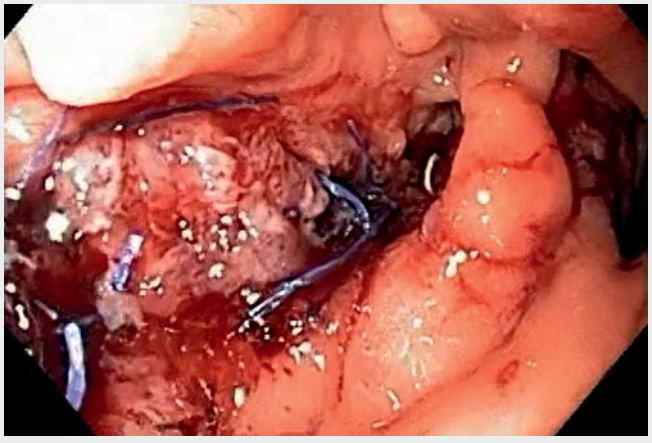
Endoscopic septotomy for fistula after bariatric surgery

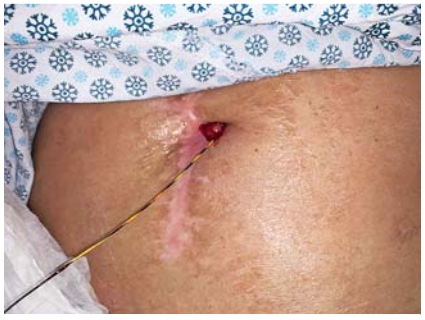
Gastric fistula following bariatric surgery is a complication with considerable morbidity and mortality [1,2]. After Roux-en-Y gastric bypass (RYGB), the gastric pouch may develop a chronic fistula and the formation of a perigastric cavity bounded by a septum. The altered anatomy chronically elevates the intraluminal pressure, impairing emptying of the perigastric cavity and perpetuating the fistula [3].

Endoscopic septotomy is a minimally invasive technique for cutting the septum. The goals are ensuring adequate patency of the perigastric cavity, decreasing its pressure, and draining the fistula [1,4,5].

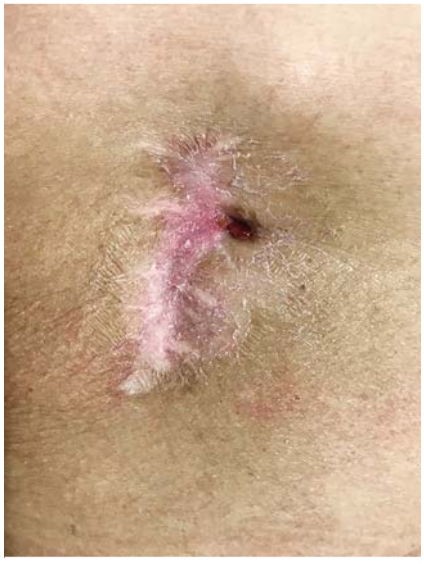
A 67-year-old woman underwent a RYGB (body mass index: 48 kg/m² before, 25 kg/m² after). She developed a gastrocutaneous fistula, which was unsuccessfully treated with a long-term nasoenteric tube. Eight months after RYGB, she was referred for endoscopic assessment (▶ **Video 1**). Sutures were identified in the greater curvature of the gastric pouch. They were removed with endoscopic scissors and a perigastric cavity (bounded by a septum) with a fistula orifice in it was identified. The fistula orifice was initially treated with argon plasma coagulation and a guidewire was externalized through the fistula's cutaneous orifice (▶ **Fig. 1**), with placement of a 7-Fr double-pigtail stent in the fistula tract. After 3 months, the gastrocutaneous leak was reduced but not resolved. We removed the pigtail, performed a septotomy with an IT knife, and placed an esophageal fully covered (28×160 mm) self-expandable metal stent. The proximal end of the stent was fixed by endosuture to avoid migration. After 1 week, the stent was removed and the patient was able to take a soft diet. Four weeks later, the cutaneous fistula orifice was closed (▶ **Fig. 2**) and esophagogastroduodenoscopy confirmed closure of the fistula's gastric orifice (▶ **Fig. 3**). At 3 weeks' follow-up, the patient was asymptomatic and doing well on a regular diet.



Video 1 Complex fistulas after bariatric surgery require challenging endoscopic management. We report a case of bariatric surgery complicated by gastrocutaneous fistula, which was successfully treated with endoscopic septotomy.



▶ **Fig. 1** Guidewire externalized through the cutaneous orifice of the fistula.



▶ **Fig. 2** The cutaneous fistula orifice is closed.

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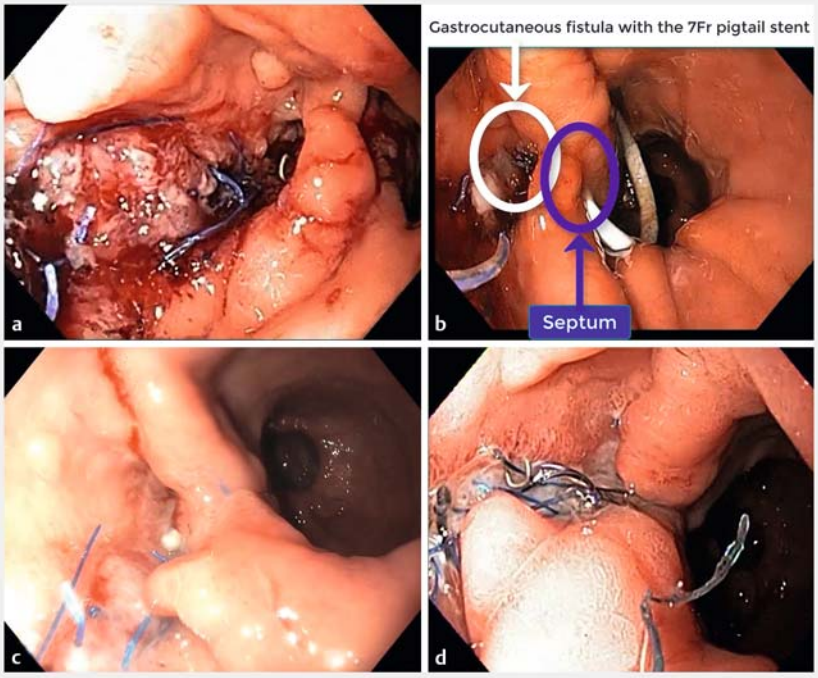
Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.



▶ **Fig. 3** Endoscopic appearance of the perigastric cavity: **a** after suture removal, **b** after 7-Fr double-pigtail insertion through the fistula orifice, and **c** after treatment with argon plasma coagulation and 7-Fr double-pigtail stent. **d** Closed fistula after septotomy (final appearance).

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