



Jersey man left in chronic pain calls for end to hernia mesh surgery

CHANNEL HEALTH SURGICAL MESH VAGINAL MESH Thursday 1 July 2021, 11:09am



A man in Jersey whose life was turned upside down after he was fitted with a surgical mesh is calling for all future hernia mesh surgery to be stopped.

Martin O'Neill is one of a growing number of patients worldwide who have experienced severe chronic pain after the surgery.

Seven years ago he was fitted with a mesh for a hernia in his groin in Jersey and was left in crippling pain overnight.

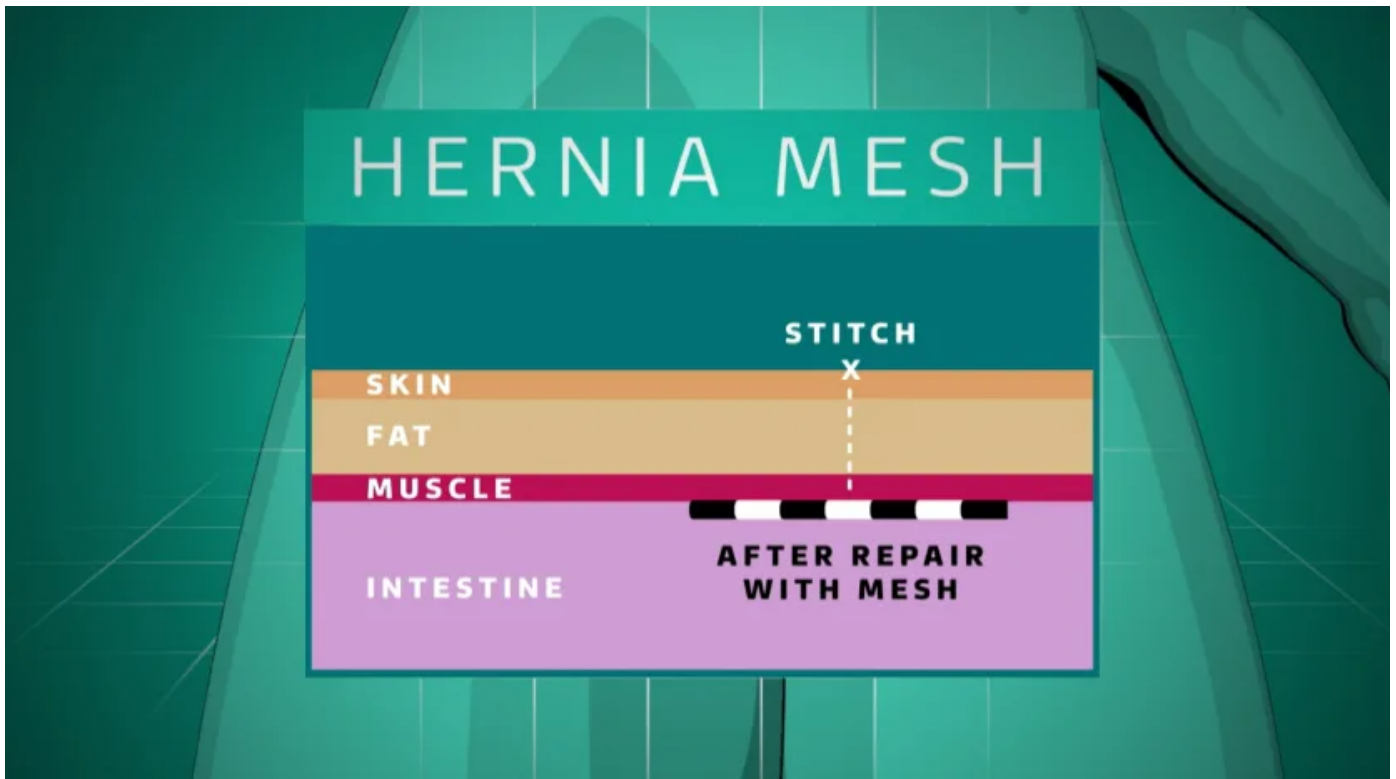
He was not advised on the risks of chronic pain beforehand.

Since then he has been repeatedly admitted to Intensive Care with multiple complications and infections.

“Who you are as a person gets destroyed. Who you were is gone and you can't become who you're meant to be because your life is perpetuated by pain. You know I had a job at ninety hours a week. I worked hard. I was in a band I loved. And that's gone. And what I have at the end of it- I'm grateful that I can walk around the block some days.”

Martin O'Neill, Hernia mesh patient

A hernia can occur in anyone of any age and forms when the abdominal wall is weakened and part of the intestine or internal organs protrude forming a lump.



A mesh is routinely fitted beneath the abdominal wall to strengthen it and stop the hernia returning
Credit: ITV Channel

There have been hundreds of reports from people like Martin left in chronic pain as a result of hernia mesh fittings.

In the UK hundreds of women who suffered life-changing complications from vaginal mesh provided their testimony to the 'Sling the Mesh' campaign.

Vaginal mesh surgery was suspended across the British Isles in 2018 after a review warned of the risk of "life-threatening injuries".

According to the Royal College of Surgeons as many as one in ten experience chronic pain after hernia mesh surgery.

have suffered chronic pain afterwards.

There are alternative surgical methods which are not routinely offered in the British Isles but some experts say they do not necessarily achieve better results and the problem should be investigated further.

“You have an equal chance of experiencing pain if you have the tissue repair or the Shouldice repair but there's a higher chance of recurrence. In experienced hands, they are comparable in terms of recurrence. So I think that's something for the Hernia Fraternity to look at. Maybe we should try and encourage more people to learn the Shouldice repair because it's all about giving patients an option.”

Professor Aali Sheen, President of the British Hernia Society

Over time the mesh becomes embedded in the body and can cause more harm to remove.

The procedure is not widely available and in the UK mesh removals have been suspended during the pandemic.

In Germany one specialist clinic has continued to offer the surgery and is seeing an ever growing demand.

“We have so many patients waiting for a removal and this is a problem because these are really patients suffering. Young patients suffering because of the mesh, having been sound and active before. 90% don't need a mesh you know and they get a mesh. This is the problem.”

Dr Ulrike Muschaweck, Hernia surgery consultant

Martin has been assessed by the clinic and is currently in quarantine in Germany awaiting the removal of his mesh on 14 July.

His surgery was cancelled with just a day's notice due to the changing Covid-19 travel restrictions.

Over five and a half thousand pounds has been raised through crowdfunding to help pay for the extra costs of his quarantine.

Martin supports the British Hernia Society's campaign for a mesh implant registry to gather further data on the impact of surgery.

He would like to see hernia mesh surgery suspended pending a further investigation.

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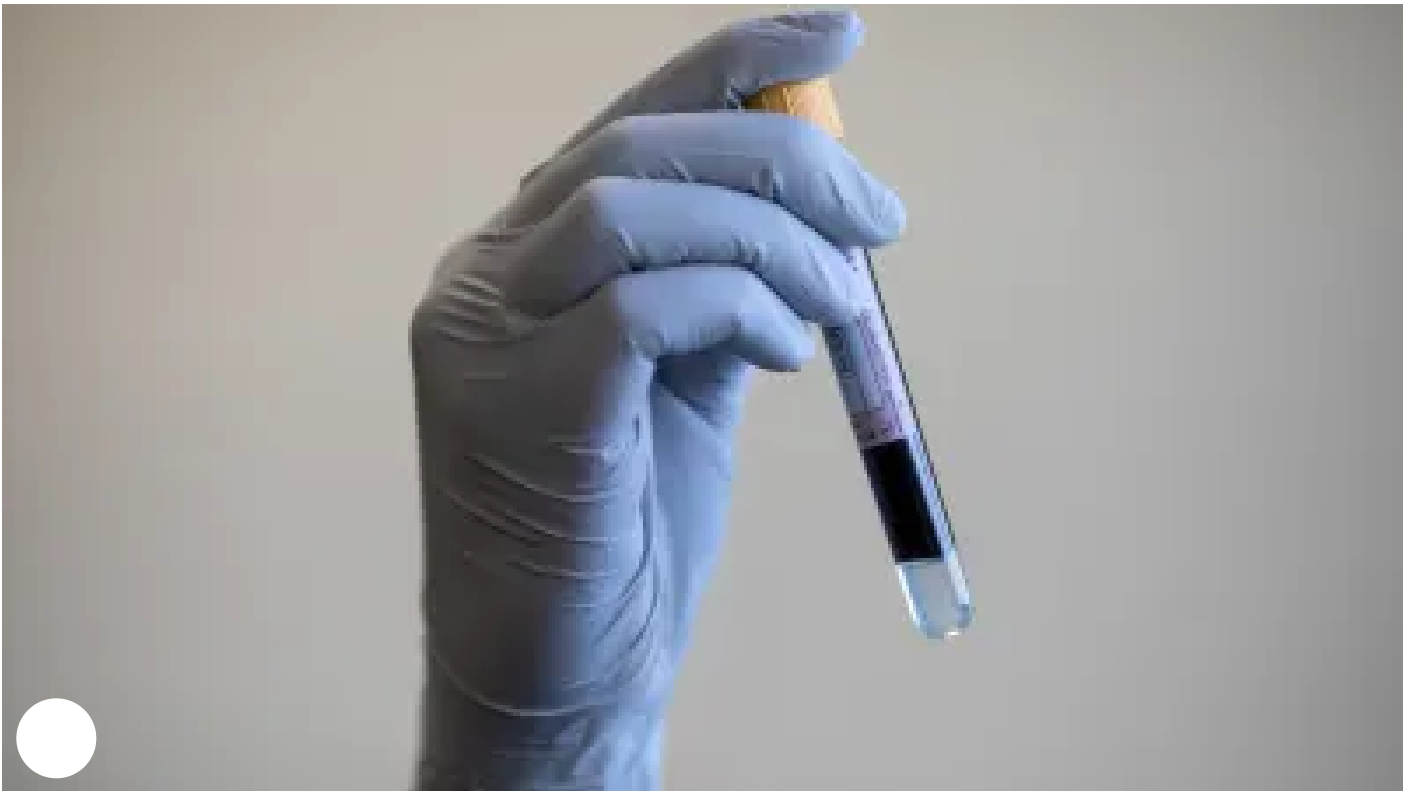
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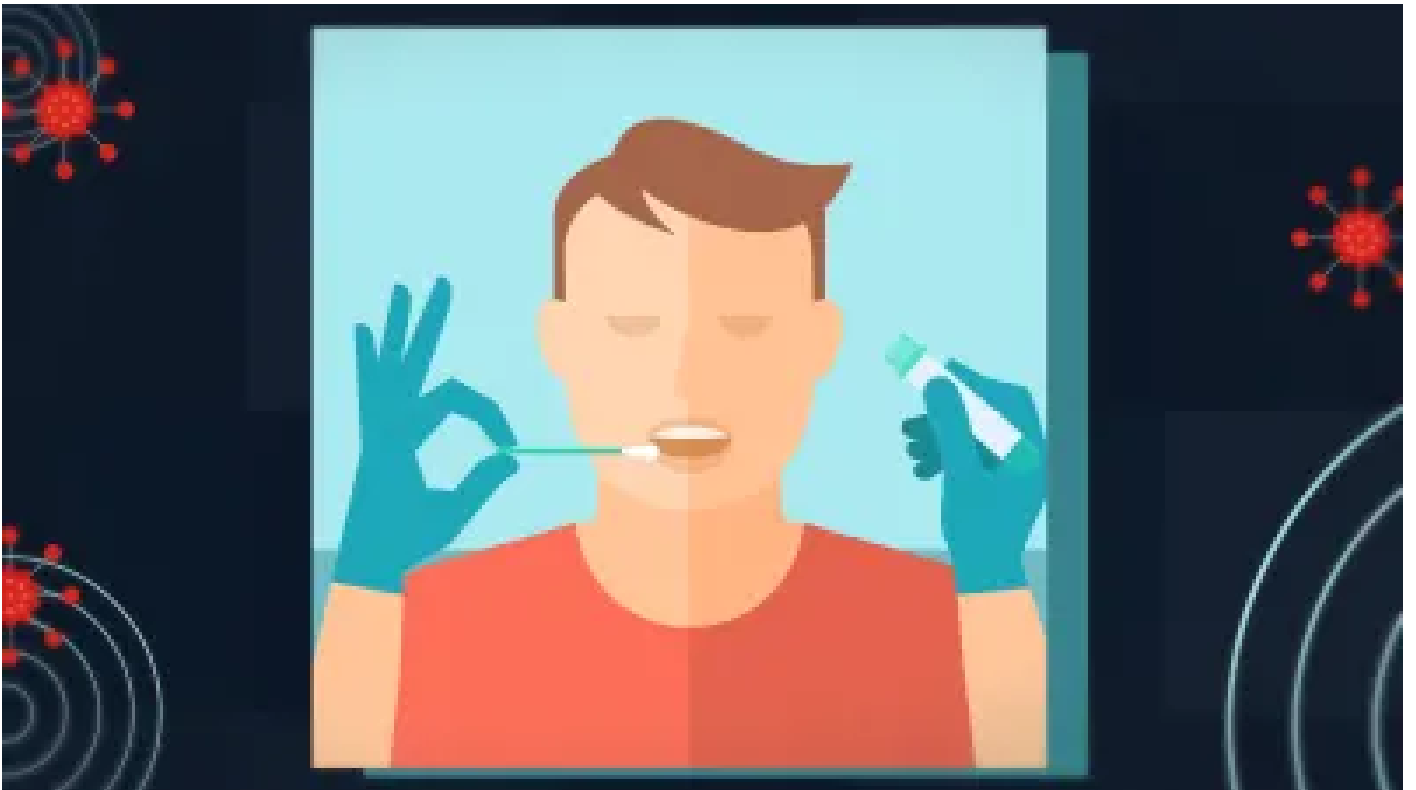
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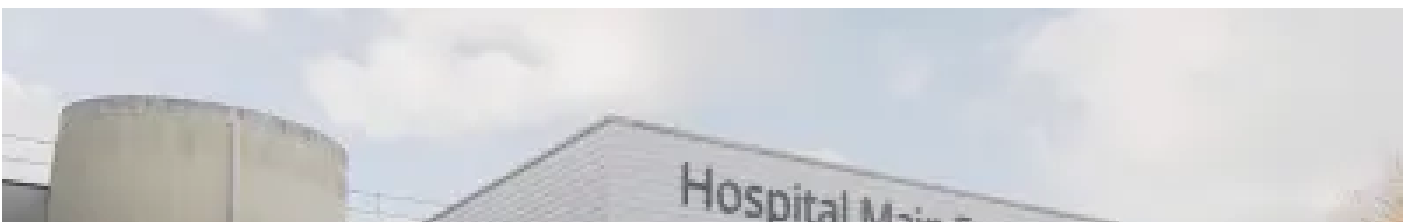
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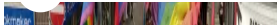
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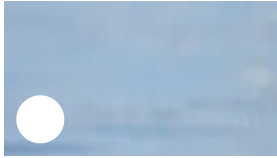


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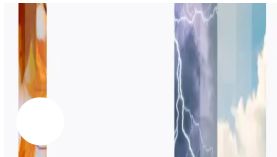
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