

Rectus Sheath Program Transcript

The rectus abdominis muscle is enveloped in a fiber sheath called the rectus sheath. This sheath is formed by aponeurosis from the lateral abdominal muscles. The arrangement of this sheath, however, varies depending upon the region of the abdomen in the epigastric region. The only muscle there is the external abdominal oblique, and so the anterior and the posterior aspects of the sheath are formed by this muscle.

In the umbilical region, there is now the external oblique, the internal oblique, and the transverse abdominis. Here, the external and internal form the anterior part of the sheath, and the internal and transverse form the posterior part of the sheath. In the hypogastric region, all three lateral abdominal muscles form the anterior part of the sheath, and posteriorly is only a thin fascia, known as the transverse abdominal fascia.

The rectus abdominis fortified by this sheath provides a stabilizing element for the lumbar vertebrae and the trunk. Also, because of the thin posterior sheath in the hypogastric region, this region has less protection against infections from the abdomen than the epigastric or umbilical regions because of the posterior rectus sheath being formed by aponeurosis of the lateral abdominal muscles.