A Tanned Stent

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Key Words

Airway stenting · Silicone stents · Smoking · Tobacco

A 38-year-old male patient was involved in a motor vehicle accident in 1997, resulting in tetraplegia and post-tracheostomy tracheal stenosis. The patient is a 30-pack-year active smoker, and smokes around 4–5 cannabis cigarettes daily.

Initial management of this tracheal stenosis had relied upon tracheal dilatation and Dumon silicone endoprosthesis (50 mm) insertion, which was replaced annually [1].

While travelling abroad in 2006, the patient had an episode of acute respiratory distress of unknown aetiology (endoprosthesis obstruction or migration), which was managed by a large incision tracheostomy. This procedure was technically difficult, since the endoprosthesis was still in place, and resulted in a major loss of tracheal and cutaneous tissue. Upon his return to France, a new, longer tracheal endoprosthesis was inserted (70 mm), in order to cover the tracheal and cutaneous gap as well as the subglottic, suprastomal stenosis.

Figure 1 shows a cervical outside view of the endoprosthesis, which was implanted 37 months ago. Figure 2

Fig. 1. Cervical outside view of the endoprosthesis.

Fig. 2. Yellow-brown discolouration, with a black zone, corresponding to the area exposed to outside air of the tracheal stent once removed.

shows the endoprosthesis once removed. It appears to have a yellow-brown discolouration, with a black zone, corresponding to the area exposed to outside air.

Such a discolouration of a bronchial or tracheal endoprosthesis has not been described in the literature [2]. However, cigarette smoke does in fact result in a brownish colour in active smokers with an airway endoprosthesis. In this particular case, direct exposure to air and sunlight might also have caused the black colour, through oxida-

tion due both to oxygen in ambient air and ultraviolet solar rays. So far there has been no report of the effect of sunlight on silicone, in particular on the external branch of the Montgomery T tube which is made of silicone.

References

- 1 Dumon JF: A dedicated tracheobronchial stent. *Chest* 1990;97:328–332.
- 2 Freitag L: Airway stents. *Eur Respir Monogr* 2010;18:190–217.