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Title: Clinical experience with a new self-expandable metal stent, SILMET, in tracheo-bronchial stenosis

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Body: Introduction: The Implantation of Tracheo bronchial stents is a recognised treatment option in the management of airway disease. However, stent related side effects and complications are still an unresolved issue and are object of intense investigation. Research is currently focusing on the delivery mechanism and on biomaterials. Aims: We evaluate the clinical result and effectiveness of the Silmet stent for treatment of benign or malignant bronchial disease. Methods: Clinical data were collected retrospectively from 21 consecutive patients. Each patient implanted were underwent to clinical monitoring, according to our protocol, consisting in endoscopic and microbiological testing at 1 day, 1 month, 3 months and 6 months after the procedure. For the evaluation of mucus plugging we used our 4 points endoscopic scoring: 0 = no secretions; 1 = moderate amount of secretions easily removable by suction; 2 = severe amount of secretions removable using a biopsy forceps, mucolytic agents instillations or other devices in addition to the suction; 3 = complete stent obstruction or deposit of thick and non-removable secretions. Results: at the end of follow-up we recorded a single death which was not respiratory related. In one patient under chemiotherapy we observed dislocation of the stent after significant tumor mass regression. No patient developed airways stenosis or trauma, airway wall damage or major complications. Nineteen patients had endoscopic score 0 and two patients score 1 in the last visit. One patient had a mild not obstructing granuloma. Conclusions: these new Silmet stent have proved effective and free of severe complications in the treatment of tracheo-bronchial stenosis.