The "U-wire" technique during ERCP for easy guide wire passage through occluded uncovered metal stents

A significant number of self-expanding metal stents (SEMSs) placed as conservative therapy for malignant biliary obstruction will become occluded [1]. Stent occlusion can be treated endoscopically either by balloon trawling to remove the biliary sludge and debris or by inserting a polyethylene stent or a second stent through the occluded stent [2]. However, these treatments can be given only after a guide wire is passed through the occluded lumen of the stent into the bile duct beyond [1], and not infrequently during ERCP, a guide wire accidentally passes through the mesh of a metal stent.

Here, we present a simple method that avoids guide wires being unintentionally passed through the mesh of an uncovered metal stent, which may result in prolongation of the ERCP procedure or fluoroscopy.

This U-wire cannulation method is an extremely effective and simple technique that avoids the risk of accidental passage of a guide wire through the mesh of a metal stent.

Endoscopy_UCTN_Code_TTT_1AR_2AZ

Competing interests: None

F. Liu1, J. Y. Zhu2, Z. S. Li1

1 Department of Gastroenterology, Changhai Hospital, Second Military Medical University, Shanghai, China
2 Department of Gastroenterology, Jinan Central Hospital, Shandong Province, China

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DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.1055/s-0031-1291672
Endoscopy 2012; 44: E116
© Georg Thieme Verlag KG Stuttgart · New York
ISSN 0013-726X

Corresponding author
F. Liu, MD
Department of Gastroenterology
Changhai Hospital, Second Military Medical University
168 Changhai Road
Shanghai
China
Fax: +86-21-55621735
drluffeng@hotmail.com

Fig. 1 Endoscopic and radiographic views of the U-shaped guide wire technique for passage of a guide wire through an occluded uncovered metal stent. a Endoscopic view of the U-shaped guide wire positioned at the end of the metal stent. b Radiographic image of the U-shaped tip of the wire at the distal end (nearest the ampulla) of the metal stent (white arrow). c Radiographic image of the U-shaped wire in the lumen of the metal stent (white arrow). d Radiographic image of the guide wire after it has been passed through the stent lumen into the proximal bile duct.