Collagenous colitis, which is clinically characterized by chronic non-bloody diarrhea, is a variant of microscopic colitis. It can be diagnosed on histological grounds, with thickening of the subepithelial collagen layer [1–3]. The colonic mucosa is usually endoscopically normal, although minor abnormalities such as edema or erythema can be seen [2,3]. Serious complications are rare.

A 69-year-old woman was referred to us with non-bloody diarrhea. Fecal analysis showed trophozoites of Dientamoeba fragilis, but treatment with metronidazole did not improve the diarrhea.

She underwent colonoscopy, which revealed a diffuse erythematous colon with small, white longitudinal linear ulcerations (Fig. 1a, b). On insufflation spontaneous longitudinal mucosal tears appeared (Fig. 1c); while the mucosa was being biopsied, large portions of it came away effortlessly. Therefore, no further examination was undertaken at this stage. Histopathological assessment subsequently showed thickening of the subepithelial collagen layer, consistent with collagenous colitis.

After the procedure the patient developed acute abdominal pain. Plain radiography revealed free air. She underwent a laparotomy, during which no perforation was identified and an ileostomy was created. After treatment with budesonide, the patient came away effortlessly. Therefore, no further examination was undertaken at this stage. Histopathological assessment subsequently showed thickening of the subepithelial collagen layer, consistent with collagenous colitis. Further endoscopic examination should not be performed, in order to prevent more damage and perforations.

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Rachel L. A. van Eijk, Dirk Jan Bac
Department of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, The Gelderse Vallei Hospital, Ede, The Netherlands

Fig. 1 Views during colonoscopy in 69-year-old woman with non-bloody diarrhea showing: a, b linear longitudinal mucosal tears; c fresh lacerations that appeared in the colonic mucosa during insufflation.

Bibliography
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Corresponding author
R. L. A. van Eijk, MD
Gelderse Vallei Ziekenhuis Ede
Gastroenterology and Hepatology
Willy Brandtlaan 10
6716 RP Ede
The Netherlands
Fax: +31-8-4350968
interneaeijkr@zgv.nl