Reviewer’s report

Title: Long-Term Outcomes of Two Types of Metal Stent for Chronic Benign Ureteral Strictures

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Reviewer: Matthias D Hofer

Reviewer's report:

The authors report on a study comparing the long-term outcomes of metal stents for chronic benign ureteral strictures. They analyzed 46 ureter units of 36 patients. Covered mesh stents had been placed in 25 ureters and thermoexpandable stents in 21. They found that prior radiation therapy and stricture location in the non-pelvic ureter were significantly affecting outcomes as was prior PCN placement.

This is an interesting paper on a controversial topic.

The main concern is the comparability of both stent populations. It appears that each stent type was chosen for a different indication. In fact, the authors state in the Methods section that a mesh stent was inserted for longer strictures or if difficult placement was anticipated. Indeed, the rate of patients with history of radiation and stricture length was higher in the mesh stent group. Not surprisingly the overall success rate was lower in patients with mesh stents albeit this was not significant.

It is therefore questionable whether both populations can be compared and given that the main predictors of failure were radiation and stricture length the validity of the results is also questionable.

The authors should contemplate reporting on both populations separately, delineating their strategy of choosing a certain stent type over the other and what the success rates are as well as risk factors for failure. Given that metal stents are a controversial topic this could be an addition to the literature as their cohort is reasonably large and the follow-up length appropriate.

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