

Correspondence

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Defect in a T-fitting Connection

To the Editor:—The Ohio Anesthesia Ventilator has a metal T-fitting (Part No. 219-7486-800) designed for insertion between the endotracheal tube slip joint and the breathing-hose Y-piece. This T-fitting provides a connection between the breathing circuit and the low-pressure disconnect alarm system of the ventilator. Routine inspection of one such T-fitting in daily clinical use in one of our operating rooms recently revealed extensive corrosion and pitting of the inner lumen, as well as gross detachment of much of its metal plating (fig. 1).

This equipment defect presents the potential hazards of obstruction of the breathing circuit and, even more serious, inadvertent pulmonary aspiration of metallic foreign bodies during anesthesia. We were able easily to dislodge the coiled, 4-cm fragment of metal plating shown in the photograph. The fragment proved to be radiopaque. Had inadvertent dislodgement taken place intraoperatively, the consequences to the patient could have been disastrous.

The manufacturer* of this equipment has been notified of the problem. All T-fittings of the type described here require careful inspection, and replacement with a non-plated solid metal or plastic T-fitting should be considered.

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In reply:—Ohio Medical Products is aware of the situation cited in the letter of Doctors Gold and Muravchick and is in the process of replacing all plated aluminum sensing tees with stainless steel tees.

All Ohio aluminum distal sensing tees should be inspected for loose plating, and the loose material removed by scrubbing with a hard-bristle brush. Tees manufactured after mid-1978 were made of stainless steel and are not involved.



FIG. 1. Corroded T-piece with coil of dislodged metal plating.

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If owners of plated aluminum distal sensing tees have not received a letter from Ohio Medical Products before January 1, 1980, they should contact B. J. Weum at 608-221-1551.

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