A 9-year-old girl who had received an orthotopic liver transplant for cryptogenic cirrhosis at the age of 5 years was admitted for the evaluation of elevated transaminases. Transabdominal ultrasound demonstrated intrahepatic biliary dilatation. Liver biopsy ruled out organ rejection, and endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) confirmed the presence of a focal anastomotic stricture (Fig. 1a).

The placement of two 7-Fr plastic biliary stents (Fig. 1b) resulted in a decrease in her transaminase levels. Follow-up procedures with additional balloon dilatation and the placement of multiple 10-Fr plastic stents with adequate decompression. c Self-expanding metal stent in the bile duct with pneumobilia. d Marked resolution of the stricture following removal of the metal stent.

Resolution of post-liver transplant anastomotic biliary stricture with successful placement of a self-expanding metallic stent in a child

By placing two 7-Fr plastic biliary stents, a decrease in transaminase levels was achieved. Follow-up procedures including balloon dilatation and the placement of multiple 10-Fr plastic stents were performed.

The persistent radial expansion force generated by the metal stent seems to result in an adequate response of the ringlike focal anastomotic stricture, making it a viable and safe alternative to repeated stent insertion for carefully selected patients with biliary strictures following transplant. A fully covered self-expanding metal stent is an emerging modality for the treatment of refractory biliary strictures following liver transplant. 

However, long-term effects of metal stent placement in pediatric patients are unknown.

Overall, biliary complication rates following liver transplant vary from 12% to 50% [1], and anastomotic strictures occur in up to 10% of patients [2]. Whereas the utility of endotherapy in the adult population is well documented, data are limited for similar interventions in the cohort of pediatric patients with liver transplants [3]. The placement of a fully covered self-expanding metal stent is an emerging modality for the treatment of refractory biliary strictures following liver transplant [4]. However, there are no documented reports in pediatric patients with liver transplants.

The placement of a fully covered self-expanding metal stent is a viable and safe alternative to repeated stent insertion for carefully selected patients with biliary strictures following transplant and provides an alternative to the surgical management of strictures that are refractory to standard endoscopic therapy. However, the long-term effect of metal stent placement in pediatric patients is unknown.

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