The prototype of the single-balloon enteroscopy system (Olympus Medical Systems Europa GmbH, Hamburg, Germany; Fig. 1) consists of a high-resolution endoscope (XSIF-Q160Y) with a working length of 200 cm, and an outer diameter of 9.2 mm, and a flexible overtube (XST-BY3A; Fig. 2) with a working length of 132 cm and an outer diameter of 13.2 mm. A latex-free balloon is only attached at the tip of the single-use silicone overtube, and is inflated and deflated with air from a pressure-controlled pump system (Olympus balloon control unit MAJ-1440).

The balloon on the tip of the overtube is deflated and inserted along the enteroscope until the tip of the enteroscope is reached. The overtube balloon is then inflated again. At this position (Fig. 3) there are two options to further thread the endoscope into the small bowel:

1. Both the enteroscope and the overtube are pulled back in order to shrink the bowel. Following that, as an additional maneuver, the enteroscope is once again threaded into the bowel.
2. The angulation is used to find the lumen of the bowel and then the overtube is pulled back and simultaneously the enteroscope is pushed forward into the lumen. In a two-examiner setting, this works best if one examiner is controlling the insertion tube plus overtube, and at the same time the other examiner controls the angulations in such a way that the distal tip always points into the free lumen.

The two options for threading the overtube into the small bowel can be combined. In comparison with enteroscopy using the double-balloon technique, this newly developed single-balloon enteroscopy seems to be easier to perform and saves time.

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D. Hartmann1, A. Eickhoff1, R. Tamm2, J. F. Riemann1

1 Department of Gastroenterology, Academic Teaching Hospital, Ludwigshafen, Germany
2 Olympus Medical Systems Europa GmbH, Hamburg, Germany

Bibliography
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Corresponding author
D. Hartmann, MD
Department of Medicine C
Klinikum der Stadt Ludwigshafen GmbH
Bremserstraße 79
67063 Ludwigshafen am Rhein
Germany
Fax: +49-621-5034114
medcluhartmann@t-online.de