SpiralAT: First Generation Artificial Trachea

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Mission Statement
We aim to provide the first artificial trachea unit that is ready for immediate implantation through a single-step surgical procedure.

Motivation for SpiralAT

Clinical Significance of Tracheal Replacement
- 90% of primary tracheal cancers are malignant.
- Of the 90,000 new cases/year of cancers in nearby throat tissues, 25-50% will develop into secondary tracheal cancer.
- Other patients suffer from congenital defects and physical trauma.

Current Approaches Sub-optimal
- Tracheal resection is limited because reconstruction after resection is not feasible.
- Radiation is not fully reliable because studies show inconsistent outcomes in effectiveness.
- Case-by-case artificial tracheas have been built, but require multi-staged surgeries that are impractical for patients with urgent needs.

There is no standardized solution.

Design Concept

Design Objectives

| Dimensions | 3.3-3.5 cm diameter 6 cm length |
| Functional Range of Motion | Flexibility in flexion/extension (flex/ext) and lateral bending |
| Biocompatibility | Scar tissue < 10% of total surface area |
| Stable and Sufficient Vascularization | > 90% of tissue vascularized |

Design Components
- Synthetic materials allow immediate use.
- Helical geometry provides stability and flexibility.
- Exterior casing promotes tissue integration.

Solution: The SpiralAT

A) Single Spiral Rice
B) Single Spiral DPT
C) Double Spiral DPT

Fig. 1. The three versions of the SpiralAT have different structures and are made of different materials. Each version consists of 2 components, a helical support structure and a shell.

Mechanical Testing

3-point bending test

Fig. 2. Simulation of flex/ext using a tennis ball covered crosshead to distribute the force across a wide area of the sample

Compression test

Fig. 4. Simulation of flex/ext lateral bending using an angled wedge attached to upper crosshead to focus compressive force on one side

Fig. 5. Increasing load resulted in elastic deformation. Double Spiral DPT was stiffer than Single Spiral DPT. (crosshead speed=20 mm/min, max extension=10 mm)

Future Work

Biocompatibility Studies in Canines
- Quantitative analysis of skin flap integration by measuring cross-sectional area at the most stenotic point.
- Qualitative endoscopy of tissue ingrowth and dehiscence.

Conclusion

- Need: Readily implantable, tracheal replacement performed in a single-step surgery.
- Solution: Standardized artificial trachea unit that comprises a polyethylene double-helical structure for stability and a polypropylene mesh for good tissue integration. The Double Spiral DPT is the most promising.
- Testing: The SpiralAT allows for flexible motion without any permanent deformation or fracture.

Acknowledgements

We're grateful for the support of Dr. Peirong Yu, Dr. Michael Liebschner, Dr. Maria Oden, Kevin Bowen, Eugene Kosey, Cain Project, Rice University’s Department of Bioengineering, and the Brown Foundation Teaching Grant.

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