

EDDIE'S CORNER



With more than three decades in the industry, Eddie Garcés, vice president of Olympus Medical Equipment Services America, is our resident guru on all facets of service and repair.

The Diagnosis on Third-Party Biopsy Channels

Ever notice how a tooth filling that is just a little too high or low can throw your whole mouth out of alignment? Space is tight, requiring everything to be a perfect fit. The same may be said for biopsy channels that are repaired or replaced by third-party vendors. A change in the channel's diameter, thickness

or elasticity can adversely impact the endoscopist's ability to perform therapeutic procedures. Olympus channels along with the appropriate accessories provide technological harmony—a perfect fit for flawless product performance and enhanced patient safety.

We've seen all sorts of third-party replacement channels,



including those made of inflexible plastic, and those with a metal braid running down their entire length. While these modifications may result in a very "strong" channel, they can wreak havoc on the scope's internal components. Stents inserted down a channel that is too narrow may get stuck. Or a channel that is a bit thicker may make the insertion tube overly rigid, requiring the physician to apply extra force to manipulate the scope.

Sometimes third parties will attempt to replace just the damaged portion of the original channel by splicing in a new segment. Unfortunately, this disrupts the channel's seamless interior. Forceps and other accessories are more likely to snag, and the channel becomes vulnerable to kinking in the weakened area around the splice. The unwanted crevice created by the splice could compromise proper reprocessing and scope functionality, and it may limit the endoscope's ability to aspirate fluids, potentially degrading image quality. Finally, a non-Olympus channel or a channel splice introduces unknown materials that have not been tested by Olympus for compatibility with the scope. Make sure your biopsy channels are always a perfect fit—insist on Olympus.

Inferior Repairs — A Stiff Price to Pay

Perhaps one of the most egregious modifications performed by third-party vendors is the replacement of original Olympus insertion tubes with their own aftermarket parts. Not only does this alter how the endoscope behaves during a procedure, it can also potentially lead to more costly repairs and negate premium design features in the process.

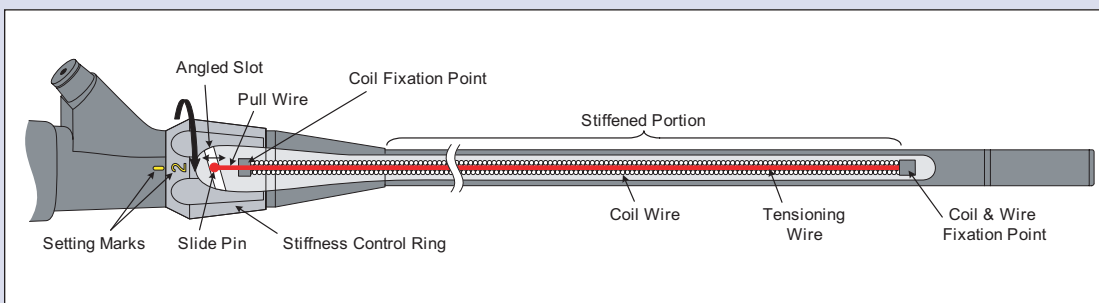
Let me give you an example. In the Olympus Innoflex™ colonoscope a special tensioning mechanism inside allows the endoscopist to adjust the stiffness of the insertion tube to suit individual handling preferences as well as adapt the instrument to a patient's unique anatomy and the requirements of the procedure. A control ring just under the endoscope's grip regulates the amount of stiffness delivered to the insertion tube.

As the control ring is rotated, the tensioning wire is tightened, increasing the rigidity of the instrument.

Olympus colonoscope insertion tubes provide an attachment mechanism for this tensioning system at both ends. It is essential for both ends of the tensioning system to be properly attached to engage the variable stiffness feature.

Unfortunately, we've seen a lot

of Olympus Innoflex colonoscopes that have been modified with third-party insertion tubes, rendering their advanced functionality useless. It's analogous to paying extra money to purchase a vehicle with four-wheel drive and then having your mechanic disable that capability without your approval. The car may still run, but you definitely wouldn't want to drive it in the snow. These third-party shortcuts can be costly, frustrating and unwanted. They can also dramatically impact the endoscope's performance characteristics and the value of your original investment. Keep your Olympus products 100% Olympus.



Eddie