

Mom, why is everyone laughing at me? Unrecognized laryngeal web – a case report

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Introduction: A congenital laryngeal web is a rare malformation representing fewer than 5% of congenital laryngeal anomalies. More than 95% of laryngeal webs are anterior glottis webs, with symptoms depending on the localization and the size of the web, varying from an isolated weak or absent cry since birth to acute respiratory distress. The initial diagnosis is suggested by fiberendoscopy, but the definitive diagnosis must be established by rigid endoscopy. Endoscopic surgery – microlaryngoscopy with excision of the web with laser or cold knife is the most widely performed procedure. In the case of a severe airway obstruction, tracheostomy is obligatory. We present a case of a female patient, in whom an unrecognized laryngeal web led ultimately to social deprivation among her peers. **Case summary:** A six-year-old female patient developed a husky voice with episodes of mild respiratory distress during early childhood. The patient was diagnosed with the laryngopharyngeal reflux and paresis of the vocal cord, treated with symptomatic therapy. The treatment was not successful and the voice hoarseness ensued. Ultimately, the patient began having trouble communicating with her peers, for which she was advised to seek the help of psychologist and a language-speech therapist. After years of unaltered condition, she was referred to our Clinic for a second opinion. A fiberendoscopic examination revealed an anterior laryngeal web. The decision was made to perform an incision and synechiolysis of the laryngeal web with carbon dioxide (CO₂) laser. Surgery and a long-term postoperative period showed satisfactory clinical findings and a good voice without any breathing difficulties. **Conclusion:** Congenital laryngeal webs are a rare malformation, which should be suspected in the presence of neonatal dysphonia and early onset of laryngitis. Congenital laryngeal webs may be successfully treated with the right choice of surgical technique resulting in a good voice quality without any scarring.

Key words: laryngeal web, anomalies, dysphonia