claving (Letter). *Can J Anesth* 2004; 51: 193.

- 2 Wong DT, McGuire GP. Fractured laryngeal mask airway (LMA). (Letter). *Can J Anesth* 2000; 47: 716.

REPLY:

Since its introduction into Canada in 1990, the laryngeal mask airway (LMA) has established itself as an indispensable part of daily clinical practice. In spite of the manufacturer's recommendation that a LMA be retired after 40 uses, we have original LMAs that are still in service (admittedly, a practice better avoided than observed).¹ Surprisingly, there are few reports of product failure or damage.²

The ProSeal™ LMA was introduced in 2000. The cleaning brush for this product became available in late 2003. However, even a robust and resilient device such as the ProSeal™ LMA can be irreparably damaged if it is not handled appropriately and with care.

We were pleased to review the report from Stix et al. This letter prompted us to examine all of the LMA products used in our department (n = 160) and review their cleaning procedures. None of our ProSeal™ LMAs (n = 40) had been damaged in the manner described by Stix et al. Of interest, the technique used to clean the ProSeal™ LMAs in our two facilities is similar. Our staff uses three different types of bristle brushes. One of these brushes is identical to the one pictured in the photograph submitted by Stix et al. Consequently, this brush is no longer used to clean our ProSeal™ LMAs.

The letter from W. G. Stewart is interesting. We attributed the wrinkling of the ProSeal™ LMA back cuff to aging, but as W. G. Stewart correctly points out, it is probably secondary to improper sterilization procedures.

The importance of sharing information after the discovery of problems has been under-emphasized. When colleagues are alerted to such problems, not only is the investment in the product protected, but patient safety is optimized.

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References

- 1 Wong DT, McGuire GP. Fractured laryngeal mask airway (LMA). (Letter). *Can J Anesth* 2000; 47: 716.
- 2 Brimacombe JR. Problems with the laryngeal mask airway: prevention and management. *Int Anesthesiol Clin* 1998; 36: 139–54.