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Hidden misconnection of the pulse oximeter probe on a Siemens Medical Systems, Inc. KION™ anesthesia machine

To the Editor:

Recently we found that the pulse oximeter probe on a new Siemens Medical Systems, Inc. KION™ anesthesia machine was not working. The probe seemed to be correctly connected, both on visual inspection and during a gentle "tug test". However, the light on the finger probe was not lit, and no O₂ saturation trace could be displayed on the monitor.

Eventually we noticed that there was a junction between the pulse oximeter probe and the KION™ anesthesia machine. It was possible to separate this connection, rotate one half through 180, and reattach it. The pulse oximeter then worked perfectly.

In the incorrect position, the connector protrudes about 1 mm from the junction box, while the correctly positioned connector fits flush. Also, the patient end of the clamp connecting the two parts is elevated only if the parts are incorrectly connected (Figure). There are no markings on the connector to show which way is correct, and the clamp holds the connection together fairly well, even in the incorrect position.

Siemens Medical Systems, Inc. should redesign the connection so that it is impossible to inadvertently misconnect the pulse oximeter. Until that is done, we hope that this letter will make it easier for other KION™ users to diagnose and treat a hidden misconnection of the pulse oximeter probe.

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FIGURE