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Summary

Can AI provide help in third-space endoscopy?

Henriette Heinrich

UEG Week Barcelona 2026 | Presentation

Endoscopy | Stomach & H. Pylori | Oesophagus | Digestive Oncology

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The speaker explored whether artificial intelligence can improve safety and training in third-space endoscopy procedures like POEM and ESD, concluding that while AI shows promise in vessel and tissue layer detection, clinical benefit in reducing complications has not yet been proven.

KEY POINTS

- AI trained on more than 1000 ESD images by the Augsburg Group was able to identify muscle layers very well and detect submucosal vessels faster than humans, though it is not yet known whether this prevents bleeding events.
- Studies are ongoing to determine whether AI vessel detection translates to lower bleeding rates in real-world practice, which the speaker identified as a critical unanswered question.
- AI has shown promise in recognizing procedure phases in POEM, similar to work in robotic surgery, which could enable competence assessment and real-time guidance on whether the endoscopist is in the correct anatomical location.
- The speaker believes AI-supported training is the most promising application, potentially helping trainees progress by flagging when they are struggling during phases like tunneling and correlating this with patient safety markers.
- Current evidence does not yet prove that AI makes endoscopists better, and the speaker emphasized the need for studies measuring patient-important outcomes rather than only detection accuracy.
- The speaker disclosed that a system developed by the Augsburg Group for vessel and muscle layer detection during ESD is hoped to reach the market soon, though development details remain confidential.

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