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# Patient-centered ureteroscopy: Disposable scopes provide new options

In this issue of *CUAJ*, Zekraoui et al provide a detailed micro-costing analysis of two specific disposable (single-use) flexible ureteroscopes compared with reusable flexible ureteroscopes.<sup>1</sup> Their analysis is in line with other studies that indicate at high-volume centers (in their study more than 130 cases per year), the total cost of ownership is lower for reusable flexible ureteroscopes than for the single-use models, even when comparing against a lower-priced single-use model.<sup>1</sup>

Despite this, they quite correctly point out that single-use models may play a role even at higher-volume centers for more complex cases — where the flexible scope is maximally flexed with a laser fibre in use for longer periods of time (like with larger volume and complex lower calyceal stones) — to further reduce wear and tear on reusable scopes and enhance scope lifespan before needing costly repairs.

The same may also be true for longer cases using a flexible and navigable suction (FANS) sheath with higher-volume stones, where stone fragments and sand can lodge between the scope and the sheath, potentially causing damage to the scope cladding over time.

The explosion in single-use ureteroscope models and variants, though, is one of the key technological advancements in endourology in recent times (along with FANS sheaths and direct in-scope suction). We are just now starting to see a new, wide, and exciting range of scope options.

Need a small-calibre (<7 Fr) scope that still has a 3.6 F working channel to maximize the sheath-to-scope diameter ratio and thereby enhance fragment and sand clearance during FANS ureteroscopy?

Done! Need a scope with optics and a working channel in the center (rather than offset) to better treat difficult-to-reach stones? Done! Need a larger scope with customized irrigation channels and a large central channel for in-scope suction because your FANS sheath cannot navigate a narrow infundibulum? Done! Need a scope with perfect flexion and extension to reach that dependent, medial lower calyx? Done! Need a scope with a bevelled end to better promote entrance into the ureteric orifice and intramural ureter for flexible ureteroscopy under local anesthesia alone? Coming soon!

The renaissance of flexible ureteroscopy and personalized device and equipment selection for specific patients and indications is upon us. For a patient with a 7 mm upper ureteric stone, perhaps we can use a reusable scope. For one with a 2 cm lower calyceal stone, perhaps a FANS sheath and disposable scope is the way to go.

Choice is here, and more choice is coming. Not only does that promise to save our cash-strapped hospitals' critical equipment dollars, but it promises better clinical and patient outcomes. And that is a "win-win" scenario we can all benefit from.

COMPETING INTERESTS: The author does not report any competing personal or financial interests related to this work.

## REFERENCE

1. Zekraoui O, Lee N, Kim J, et al. Micro-cost analysis of reusable compared to affordable single-use flexible ureteroscopes. *Can Urol Assoc J* 2026;20:31-6. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5489/cuaj.9327>

CORRESPONDENCE: Dr. Kenneth Pace, Division of Urology, Department of Surgery, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, Canada; [kenneth.pace@utoronto.ca](mailto:kenneth.pace@utoronto.ca)