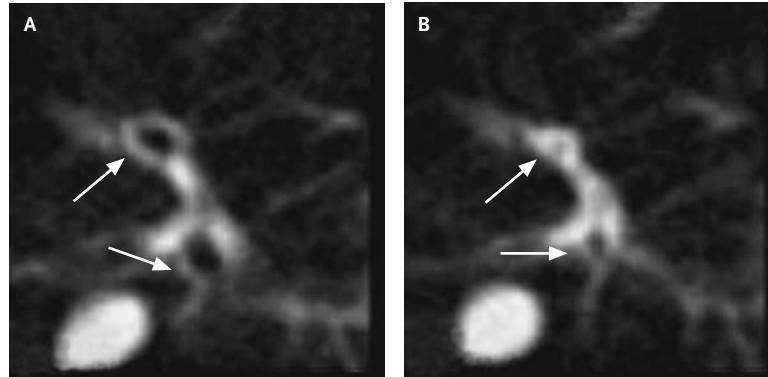


Dynamic Airway Narrowing

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Dynamic Airway Narrowing



Hajime Kurosawa, M.D.
Masahiro Kohzuki, M.D.

Tohoku University Graduate
School of Medicine
Sendai 980-8574, Japan

A 61-YEAR-OLD MAN WHO REPORTED PROGRESSIVE EXERTIONAL DYS-
pnea of 12 years' duration received a diagnosis of chronic obstructive pulmo-
nary disease on the basis of a 150-pack-year history of smoking, emphysema
on radiographic evaluation, and a forced expiratory volume in one second of 0.72 liter
(28.8 percent of the predicted value). An upper thoracic high-speed electron-beam com-
puted tomographic scan showed small airways (approximately 3 mm in diameter) that
were open during inspiration (Panel A, arrows) but extremely narrow during expira-
tion (Panel B, arrows). Dynamic narrowing of the airways is common in patients with
chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and is caused by the loss of pulmonary elastic
recoil, which would otherwise tether the airways open.

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