Sulcus Vocalis

Sulcus Vocalis is a thinning or absence of the outer layer of the vocal fold. The word "sulcus" means "furrow" or "cleft" in Latin, and describes the appearance of the divot seen in the vocal fold in this disorder. This change in the vocal fold results in alteration of the vibration of the vocal fold, thus causing hoarseness.

Symptoms:

Sulcus Vocalis causes painless hoarseness and change in the pitch of the voice. The voice is often very harsh sounding and patients require increased effort to talk. Sulcus Vocalis is a lifelong condition that onsets in adolescence.

Treatment:

Since an appropriate replacement for the missing outer layer of the vocal fold has not been identified, there is not a universally accepted method of treatment for Sulcus Vocalis.

The best treatment option for Sulcus Vocalis is debated by physicians. Some physicians recommend excision of the sulcus with advancement of the adjacent normal tissues to cover the gap left by the removal. Unfortunately, this technique often results in scarring that increases the level of hoarseness. Other physicians prefer to fill the divot by injection with fat from elsewhere in the body or collagen. With this technique, the results are not always consistent.