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## COMPLICATED TONGUE PROLAPSE IN A CHAMELEON: A NOVEL SURGERY TECHNIQUE AS A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO AMPUTATION

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### ABSTRACT

Tongue prolapse and subsequent swallowing of the tongue is not uncommon in chameleons. Tongue amputation or euthanasia is the currently proposed treatment. A 1-yr-old Malagasy giant chameleon (*Furcifer oustaleti*) weighing 65 grams was presented because of a tongue prolapse, presumed to have occurred during feeding. During the journey to the clinic, the tongue protrusion disappeared spontaneously. On clinical examination, only a small part of the tongue muscle covering the entoglossal process was visible, and the tongue pad could not be detected in the oral cavity. Whole body radiographs revealed the suspicion of a swallowed tongue, and it was suspected that the tongue pad and adhering muscles had been displaced into the cranial coelomic cavity within the oesophagus/stomach region. The chameleon was anesthetized and the tongue was brought back into its normal anatomic position within the oral cavity. Shortly afterwards, the tongue turned down again and the tongue pad was re-swallowed. Therefore, fixation or amputation of the tongue were the only options available. Because the organ still seemed viable, the tongue was returned to its normal anatomic position and was fixed with modified cruciate sutures on both sides of the tongue within the oral cavity. Flumetasone (Acutol –Lösung<sup>®</sup>, 0.5 mg/ml, Essex Tierarznei, München, Germany) at a dose of 0.05 mg was administered subcutaneously after surgery to prevent detumescence of the tongue. Five days later, the sutures were removed and the tongue remained in situ. After 3 wk of hand-feeding, the animal started capturing prey using its tongue in a natural manner.