Second-Generation Supraglottic Airway Is More Successful for Prehospital Intubations

Kristi L. Koenig, MD, FACEP, FIFEM

Compared with a laryngeal mask, the i-gel supraglottic airway had a higher insertion success rate in an Australian prehospital system.

Does the type of supraglottic airway make a difference? Investigators prospectively randomized 51 patients with out-of-hospital cardiac arrest to insertion of either the i-gel supraglottic airway or the Portex Soft Seal Laryngeal Mask by paramedics in a single Australian ambulance service. Both groups received initial bag-valve-mask ventilation prior to insertion of the advanced airway. Patients were 12 years and older (average age, 65) and weighed at least 30 kg.

Paramedics reported a significantly higher rate of successful insertion with the i-gel than the laryngeal mask (90% vs. 57%) and rated the i-gel significantly easier to insert. No differences in number of insertion attempts or rates of return of spontaneous circulation were detected between groups.

Comment: Although this small study may have been biased by paramedic self-reporting, the difference in success rates between the two airways is impressive. The i-gel supraglottic airway is a simpler device that does not require inflation of a perilaryngeal cuff and has an intrinsic bite block. Consider implementing the i-gel as a first-line supraglottic airway in your emergency medical services system.

Note to Readers: At the time NEJM JW reviewed this paper, its publisher noted that it was not in final form and that subsequent changes might be made.

Citation(s):


Copyright © 2014. Massachusetts Medical Society. All rights reserved.