Infant Airway Management: The i-gel vs. the LMA Classic

Cheryl Lynn Horton, MD, R. Eleanor Anderson, MD

A randomized study showed that the devices performed similarly, but the i-gel was considered easier to use.

The i-gel is a disposable supraglottic airway device with a noninflatable cuff, and the laryngeal mask airway (LMA) Classic is a reusable device with an inflatable cuff. To compare performance of these devices in infants, researchers randomized 54 patients younger than 12 months who were undergoing elective surgery to insertion with either the i-gel or the LMA Classic by experienced operators.

First-attempt insertion success rates did not differ significantly: 100% in the i-gel group and 88% in the LMA Classic group. Operators rated insertion as easy in 96% of the i-gel group versus 69% of LMA Classic group. The devices had similar insertion times, fiberoptic glottic views, airway leak pressures, and complication rates.

Comment: The i-gel and the LMA Classic had similar performance characteristics, but the i-gel was considered easier to use in these infants. Both devices can be used as primary or rescue airway devices in children younger than 1 year.

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