Safety First - Pre-emptive Fiberoptic or Safety Last - LMA

Abstract Type: Original Research
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Introduction: The incidence of failed intubation (FI) remains at 1/300 for the past three decades. Equipment surveys reveal LMAs are stocked in 100% of obstetrical units, while fiberoptic bronchoscopes in only 8%. This promotes the use of the LMA for rescue. What other factor accounts for an unchanged rate of FI?

Methods: A meta-analysis of difficult airway predictors (Mallampati, thyromental, interincisor) was conducted to determine the area under the composite receiver –operator curve (AUCROC). A review of our general anesthesia c-section database was used to determine our current trend in airway management.

Results: The AUCROC for composite scores was 0.8. The incidence of FI in our obstetric unit for the years 1984-2004 was 1/2500 with a prophylactic fiberoptic rate (PFO) of 14%. The FI for the years 2005-2008 was 1/100 with a PFO of under 10%.

Discussion: To prevent 50% of FI would require a PFO of 15% (figure), unachievable in 92% of obstetrical units.
