Quality improvement in anesthetic practice--incidence of sore throat after using small tracheal tube.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE: Sore throat following surgery is common and is due to multitude of factors. The highest incidence of sore throat tends to occur in patients who have undergone tracheal intubation. Between 14.4% to 50% of intubated patients complain of sore throat and hoarseness in the immediate postoperative period, 3% of them are still hoarse after a week. This contributes to higher incidence of postoperative morbidity and patient dissatisfaction of the service. A prospective study was conducted to demonstrate the incidence of hoarseness and sore throat following the use of small tracheal tubes.

METHODS: Adult patients, 16 years old and above, presented for tonsillectomy, nasal surgery and/or for functional endoscopic sinus surgery (FESS) were included in the study. Patients who had signs of, common cold were excluded from the study. Size 7-7.5 mm cuffed tracheal tube was used in males and size 6-6.5 mm in females. Patients were asked during 24 hours postoperatively about the presence of hoarseness of voice and of their satisfaction of the service.

RESULTS: There were 1618 patients 883 males and 735 females, ages: 16-62 yrs included in the study between February 2000 and end of May 2003. 189 (11.7%) developed postoperative hoarseness of voice and 1429 (88.3%) did not have hoarseness or sore throat (P = 0.0001). Patient satisfaction was 95%.

CONCLUSIONS: The use of small tube in intubating the trachea, together with other measures such as lubricating the tube with water soluble jelly, careful airway instrumentation, intubation only when patient was fully relaxed, careful suctioning technique, and extubation when the tracheal tube cuff was fully deflated, have dramatic effects on minimizing the incidence of postoperative hoarseness and sore throat. Accordingly, patient satisfaction has been reported to be high.

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