

Use of the Disposable Airtraq Optical Laryngoscope for Orotracheal Intubation in Patients with Infectious Diseases

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Statements

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The Airtraq Optical Laryngoscope (AOL; manufactured by Prodol Meditec, Vizcaya, Spain) is a new *disposable* device that proved to be uniquely useful for routine and difficult laryngoscopy and orotracheal intubation (1-4). The advantages of the AOL are that *the entire unit is disposable* and the costs are reasonable (about 48 Euro, exclusive value-added taxes, according to the offer of the Austrian distributor of the AOL, queried in March 2007).

Hygienic reprocessing of reusable airway management devices may be problematic, particularly after use in patients with transferable infectious diseases. We therefore started in March 2007 with the routine use of the disposable AOL for laryngoscopy and tracheal intubation in patients with transferable infectious diseases (mainly caused by hepatitis C virus). Fourteen patients (including two with anatomic features predictive for difficult conventional laryngoscopy and tracheal intubation) are now included in this evaluation. AOL-assisted tracheal intubation with standard tracheal tubes was successful at the first attempt with laryngeal views of the entire laryngeal aperture. This procedure may further eliminate possible cross contamination with reusable airway devices.

Recently, three video laryngoscope systems with dedicated disposable laryngoscope blades (supplied in sterile packaging) were launched: the AirWay Scope [Pentax Corporation, Tokyo, Japan (5)], the GlideScope Cobalt Video Laryngoscope [Verathon Medical, Bothell, Washington, United States (6)], and the McGrath Portable Video Laryngoscope (Aircraft Medical, Edinburgh, United Kingdom). They may be less suitable in this patient population because the reusable handles (and the camera systems) may become contaminated during the laryngoscopy and tracheal intubation process and their thorough hygienic reprocessing is limited.

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