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British Journal of Anaesthesia 95 (6): 729-36 (2005)
doi:10.1093/bja/aei269

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REVIEW ARTICLE

The laryngeal tube

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The laryngeal tube (VBM Medizintechnik, Sulz, Germany) is a relatively new extraglottic airway, designed to secure a patent airway during either spontaneous breathing or controlled ventilation. In this review article, we have assessed the potential role of the laryngeal tube during anaesthesia and during cardiopulmonary resuscitation. There are four variations of the laryngeal tube: standard laryngeal tube, disposable laryngeal tube, laryngeal tube-Suction II and disposable laryngeal tube-Suction II. The design of the device has been revised several times. Insertion of the standard laryngeal tube is as easy as with the laryngeal mask airway classic. The laryngeal tube may provide a better sealing effect than the laryngeal mask. The incidence of complications with the two devices is similar, although the laryngeal tube may require more re-adjustments of its position to obtain a clear airway. Compared with the ProSeal™ laryngeal mask, the laryngeal tube may be less effective. The efficacy of the standard laryngeal tube is unclear, particularly in patients breathing spontaneously or in children. The efficacy of the laryngeal tube Suction-II and disposable devices is also not clear. From the limited number of studies and reports available, it can be concluded that the laryngeal tube is potentially useful in maintaining a clear airway during anaesthesia and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. In addition, the device may be useful as an aid to tracheal intubation.

Br J Anaesth 2005; 95: 729-36

Keywords: airway; complications, difficult intubation; equipment, laryngeal tube

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