The I-gel vs. the LMA Supreme: The More Things Change.

The two devices performed similarly in a simulated airway model.

The single-use Laryngeal Mask Airway Supreme (LMA-S) is a promising primary and rescue airway device that combines easy insertion, high success rate, high cuff-seal pressure, and a channel for nasogastric tube insertion (JW Emerg Med Mar 6 2009). The manufacturer of a newer single-use device — the i-gel — claims all these attributes plus the advantage that the i-gel's soft elastomer cuff does not require inflation. Researchers in Switzerland compared the two devices in a simulated difficult airway scenario achieved by placement of cervical extrication collars to limit mouth opening and neck extension in 60 elective anesthesia patients.

For each patient, after general anesthesia was induced without neuromuscular blockade, one of four anesthesiologists who had used each device more than 20 times inserted the devices in random order, according to methods and sizing recommended by the manufacturers. The LMA-S and the i-gel were comparable in overall insertion success rate (95% and 93%), first-pass insertion success rate (93% and 85%), airway leak pressure (26 cm H2O and 27 cm H2O), nasogastric tube placement failure (2% each), and minor intraoperative adverse event rates (8.3% and 6.6%). Insertion time was significantly shorter with the LMA-S than with the i-gel (34 vs. 42 seconds).

Comment: The LMA-S and the i-gel perform similarly, and the choice of which device to use should be based on individual preference.

— Ron M. Walls, MD, FRCPC, FAAEM

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