Preface

Airways and Breathing in Emergency Medicine

Haney Mallemat, MD  Terren Trott, MD
Editors

Emergency Medicine physicians are tasked with caring for some of the most critically ill patients who enter the hospital. They must rapidly stabilize and manage patients with septic shock, cardiac arrest, and major trauma. One of the most challenging issues Emergency Physicians face is airway management and respiratory diseases. Inability to manage a patient’s airway may rapidly lead to death or disability. Respiratory diseases alone or in combination with airway management can also lead to a rapid decline in a patient’s clinical status and worsen outcomes.

In this issue of Emergency Medicine Clinics of North America, our authors tackle some of the fundamental topics in airway management and respiratory disease. These core topics are ubiquitous in the field of emergency medicine and remain challenging topics in management despite advances in our medical understanding. Some topics reviewed include high-intensity high-stakes presentations that require premeditated review and even rehearsal of management. These represent some of our sickest patients, such as the crashing asthmatic or patient with a massive pulmonary embolism. Alternatively, we discuss the approach to our difficult airways, whether those be a bleeding necrotic neck cancer or the intubation of a patient with a pH of 6.7 and a respiratory rate of 44. Our authors navigate these challenging patients, and subsequent articles outline ventilator management and troubleshooting.

How do we approach the patient who appears to be fighting the ventilator to the point of hypoxia? Refractory hypoxia and hypercapnia are reviewed in articles on airway-pressure release ventilation, noninvasive ventilation, acute respiratory distress syndrome, and ventilator dyssynchrony. Adjuncts to management and special procedures are reviewed, such as chest tube placement and fiberoptic intubation. Past initial stabilization and initiation of mechanical ventilation, we also review core topics, such as management of respiratory infections, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease,
and pulmonary hypertension. These topics, combined, highlight the challenge and importance of airway management and respiratory disease by Emergency Medicine.

Haney Mallemat, MD
Department of Internal Medicine and Emergency Medicine
Cooper Medical School at Rowan University
1 Cooper Medical Plaza
Camden, NJ 08103, USA

Terren Trott, MD
Department of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine and Emergency Medicine
University of Kentucky
222 Arlington Avenue
Lexington, KY 40508, USA

E-mail addresses:
haney.mallemat@gmail.com (H. Mallemat)
terren.trott@gmail.com (T. Trott)