



NSW Speech Pathology Evidence Based Practice Interest Group

Critically Appraised Paper (CAP)

CLINICAL BOTTOM LINE: The author proposes that patients with tracheostomy tubes should not be fed orally due to aspiration risk. Alternatively, patients should be nutritionally maintained by parenteral feeding. Low level of evidence (single cases)

Clinical Question [patient/problem, intervention, (comparison), outcome]: Is it safe to feed patients with the tracheostomy tube cuff inflated?

Search Terms: Tracheostomy
Aspiration
Deglutition

Search Systems:

Citation: Pinkus, NB., (1973) The Dangers of Oral Feeding in the Presence of Cuffed Tracheostomy Tubes. Medical Journal of Australia 1:1238-1240

Design: 2 case studies, retrospective reporting of incidents

Participants: 2 males aged 70 and 71 years. Medical condition of patient 1: large perforated duodenal ulcer; patient 2: COAD

Experimental Group:

Control Group: No control group

Results: Food particles found on tracheal suctioning (cuff inflated during suction) after oral feeding with inflated cuff. One patient also spontaneously coughed food particles from tube with cuff still inflated.

Level of Evidence/Comments on Design:

Unable to generalise findings due to only 2 disparate cases described and tracheostomy tube specification changes over the years.

Appraised By: Tia Croft
Clinical Group: Tracheostomy Discussion Group

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