Methods of Administering Superimposed High-Frequency Jet Ventilation and the Associated Risk for Aspiration in a Model of Tracheal Bleeding

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Abstract

Background: To determine the suitability of different superimposed high-frequency jet ventilation (SHFJV) application methods during tracheal bleeding. Objective: To determine the effect of SHFJV on the aspiration of blood during tracheal bleeding. Methods: A test lung was ventilated using SHFJV via a rigid endoscope, a jet laryngoscope and a 4-lumen jet catheter. Packed red blood cells (PRBCs) were injected into the artificial trachea caudally to the rigid endoscope and jet laryngoscope ventilation, and both caudally and cranially during ventilation via the 4-lumen jet catheter, and the migration of PRBCs during ventilation was studied using continuous video recording. Results: Migration of blood into the lower respiratory tract did not occur during SHFJV via the rigid endoscope and jet laryngoscope ventilation, and both caudally and cranially during ventilation via the 4-lumen jet catheter, and the migration of PRBCs during ventilation was studied using continuous video recording. Conclusions: SHFJV protects the lower respiratory tract from blood aspiration in case of tracheal bleeding. During SHFJV via the 4-lumen jet catheter, aspiration of blood only occurs if bleeding is localized cranial to the 4-lumen jet catheter ventilation. In case of heavy tracheal bleeding, the jet sources should be positioned cranial to the site of bleeding.

Introduction

Superimposed high-frequency jet ventilation (SHFJV) which does not require an endotracheal tube was developed specifically for use in laryngotracheal surgery. The application of SHFJV extends opportunities for surgeons, interventional pulmonologists and anesthesiologists to control the surgical field. SHFJV uses two simultaneous jet streams with different frequencies and is applied in the trachea using several tools, including jet laryngoscopes, rigid endoscopes, jet catheters and TwinStream jet ventilators (Carl Reiner GmbH, Vienna, Austria). SHFJV con-
sists of a combination of pressure-limited low- (LF) and high-frequency (HF) jet ventilation with the application of sufficient tidal volumes and continuous oxygenation as well as ventilation during laryngotraheal interventions. SHFJV was developed in 1990 and has been used in clinical trials [1–5]. An important effect that occurs during transtracheal HF jet ventilation is the prevention of aspiration [6]. For example, hemoptysis is a frequently encountered symptom in the pulmonologist practice, with a spectrum from blood-streaked sputum to major bleeding with ensuing respiratory compromise. Major tracheal bleeding, although accounting for a minority of cases, should always be considered as a life-threatening condition that requires effective management of ventilation [7–9]. The purpose of this study was to explore the efficacy of SHFJV, which was administered trancheally via a rigid endoscope, jet tracheoscope or 4-lumen jet catheter, in preventing the aspiration of blood in the trachea in an experimental in vitro setting.

Materials and Methods

An adult training test lung (Michigan Instruments Inc., Grand Rapids, Mich., USA) with an attached graduated artificial trachea model (diameter 20 mm) was used in all experimental tests. To protect the test lung from blood, we used heat and moisture exchangers (HME) between the artificial trachea and the test lung.

In trial 1, the test lung was ventilated via a rigid size-10 endoscope (Ref. No. CTNS-414-TBS; Carl Reiner GmbH) using SHFJV (TwinStream, Carl Reiner GmbH) simultaneously via two integrated jet nozzles [HF = 600/min, inspiratory:expiratory ratio (I:E) = 1:1; LF = 12/min, I:E = 1:1; driving pressure 1.0 bar at both nozzles; compliance of the ventilated test lung: 0.04 liters/cm H2O]. The airway pressures [positive end expiratory pressure (PEEP)/peak inflation pressure (PIP)] of the test lung were measured (PIP = 14.2 mbar, PEEP = 6.2 mbar; fig. 1).

In trial 2, the test lung was ventilated via a rigid size-10 endoscope (Ref. No. CTNS-330-001; Carl Reiner GmbH) using SHFJV with the parameters as in trial 1. The airway pressures (PIP/PEEP) of the test lung were measured (PIP = 10.0 mbar, PEEP = 6.0 mbar; fig. 2).

Fig. 1–4. Rigid endoscope (1), jet laryngoscope (2) and 4-lumen jet catheter (3, 4) connected with an artificial trachea with caudal (1–3) and cranial (4) application of blood.
In trial 3, the test lung was ventilated via a 4-lumen jet catheter (Ref. No. CTFS-544-010; Carl Reiner GmbH) using SHFJV with the same frequency as in trial 1, but modified I:E = 1:1.5; LF = 12/min, I:E = 1:1.5; driving pressure LF nozzle: 2.5 bar and HF nozzle: 1.5 bar; compliance of the ventilated test lung: 0.04 liters/cm H2O). The airway pressures (PIP/PEEP) of the test lung were measured (PIP = 5.1 mbar, PEEP = 1.9 mbar; fig. 3).

In trial 4, 10 ml of packed red blood cells (PRBCs) were injected cranial to a 4-lumen jet catheter during jet ventilation (over a period of 30 s) in a graduated trachea model, and the migration of the PRBCs during breathing with SHFJV was documented by continuous video recording (fig. 4).

In trial 5, 10 ml of PRBCs were introduced caudal to the (i) rigid endoscope; (ii) jet laryngoscope and (iii) 4-lumen jet catheter (5 tests for each source of jet ventilation) over a period of 30 s in a graduated trachea model, and the migration of the PRBCs during breathing with SHFJV was documented by continuous video recording (fig. 1–3).

**Results**

In our experimental simulation of a bleeding trachea, no backflow of blood occurred from the trachea into the endoscopes during the use of SHFJV with the rigid endoscope and the jet laryngoscope or the 4-lumen jet catheter with caudal application of blood. These results were reproducible in a 5-test series. Transportation of blood into the lower respiratory tract did not occur in cases with jet ventilation over the rigid endoscope or jet laryngoscope (fig. 5, 6). During the caudal introduction of blood and use of SHFJV with the 4-lumen jet catheter, blood swirling occurred within the trachea model (fig. 7). During the use of the 4-lumen jet catheters with caudal introduction of blood, the HME between the artificial trachea and the test lung remained untouched by blood until the reflux of blood reached the entrainment area. From this area, blood was transported within the jet stream into the lower respiratory tract. Additionally, continuous migration of injected blood towards the larynx was observed on the wall of the trachea.

**Discussion**

Our results demonstrate that SHFJV prevents the aspiration of blood under the given conditions if the bleeding occurs caudal to the source of jet ventilation or if the bleeding is not localized within the stream of entrainment.

The main aim of the experimental simulation was to elucidate the flow process during SHFJV within the trachea as well as its interaction with bleeding during ventilation. This experimental simulation offers an outstanding way to understand fluid flow under highly transient conditions, such as during the application of SHFJV. However, the results of this experimental simulation strongly rely on the applied models and boundary conditions. Of course, the effects of SHFJV in case of heavy bleeding in deeper airway sections require further investigation. Because of Bernoulli’s law, a pressure gradient generated through the openings of the airway dictates the
direction of the fluid flow. For all forms of jet ventilation, gas leakage in conjunction with pressure difference between the inside of the airway and the outer region is responsible for the flow direction and speed of respiratory gas and blood (e.g. in the case of heavy tracheal bleeding).

Therefore, experimental investigations show that a backflow of air and blood from the trachea into the endoscopes in the case of tracheal bleeding during SHFJV is unlikely under the given boundary conditions. The mechanisms underlying the prevention of pulmonary aspiration likely involve the continuous gas outflow from the lungs. This forceful gas outflow serves as a pneumatic valve to prevent aspiration. When using the 4-lumen jet catheters, it is important to ensure that the jet catheter is positioned cranial to the source of bleeding within the trachea. If the jet catheters are positioned caudal to the source of tracheal bleeding, the blood will be transported into the lower respiratory tract. Our model enables a simple comparison of aspiration risk during peri-interventional tracheal bleeding using three methods of SHFJV application. This type of study would not be feasible if performed in patients at risk for inadequate oxygenation and ventilation. However, we appreciate that there may be differences between our model and the in vivo situation in terms of airway anatomy, controlled delivery of SHFJV in a shared airway during operational intervention and specific patient factors. Depending on the diameter of the instruments introduced (i.e. to perform tracheal hemo-

stasis, laser therapy) the entrainment as well as the gas flow in the trachea and, consequently, the effects described may be reduced. Adding an HME to a respiratory system may cause a small increase in airway resistance. HMEs may also reduce the pressure amplitude generated by the ventilator. However, these differences do not affect the high gas flow during HF ventilation modes like SHFJV. Regarding the flow characteristics and blood flow direction, the small increase in airway resistance with HMEs inserted can be ignored in this model. The horizontal experimental setup, the low elasticity of the artificial trachea and the temporary observation interval are noted as limitations of this model.

**Conclusion**

In this trachea model, SHFJV was associated with protection against the aspiration of blood if the tracheal bleeding was caudal to the source of jet ventilation or if the bleeding was not localized within the entrainment stream. The jet device has to be positioned cranial to the bleeding source. If the tracheal bleeding occurs cranial to the jet source, blood will be aspirated during SHFJV. This difference is attributable to the entrainment of air, which transports the blood into the lower respiratory tract. The implication of our results for the practicing anesthesiologist is that in the case of heavy tracheal bleeding, the jet
sources should be positioned cranial to the bleeding site. The findings of this study also lead to the conclusion that a 4-lumen-jet catheter should not be used if relevant tracheal bleeding is anticipated. In summary, SHFJV may reduce the risk of aspirating blood and hence the potential for asphyxia in patients that undergo tracheal surgery and have a potential risk of heavy bleeding into the respiratory tract.

Financial Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no funding, financial relationships or conflicts of interest to disclose.

References