Cases in Emergency Airway Management

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Preface

Emergent airway management, either inside or outside the operating room, can be a frightening challenge. The limited available history of the patient, the rapid need for action, the limited availability of equipment, and frequent lack of additional staff to assist are many of the reasons why complications in this arena are higher than in elective intubations. Both the American Society of Anesthesiologists closed claims analysis in the USA and the Fourth National Audit Project of the Royal College of Anaesthetists in the UK have demonstrated increased complication rates associated with airway management outside the operating room environment.

We created this book to remove many of the unknowns encountered, and to help prepare airway managers for these emergency situations. We strove to produce a volume that is part textbook and part handbook; providing both a scientific foundation about a variety of emergent clinical situations as well as suggested guidelines and algorithms to manage these patients safely. Many textbooks exist that cover the topic of airway management, and there are handbooks available as well. This is one of the few texts that covers specifically and solely airway management in the emergent setting.

This book covers a variety of scenarios in both the pediatric and adult populations that may require emergent airway management in the operating room, the intensive care unit, the emergency department, and on the wards. We hope that all clinicians who are tasked with the challenge of providing airway management in the emergent setting will be drawn to this volume, and that it will provide guidance to create airway management plans and gather appropriate equipment to turn a difficult situation into a smooth, elegantly managed one. We especially encourage physicians in training to read this book.

Many of our authors have created algorithms for specific airway management situations for which no algorithm previously existed. While some of these algorithms have not yet been validated, they are based on the available scientific evidence. Where previously published algorithms exist, they have been included here as well.

This book is dedicated to the front-line emergency airway managers, of all specialties, who work in the trenches and deal with these airway catastrophes on a daily basis.

The editors would like to thank Claire Levine, MS for her excellent and tireless editing.

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