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THE PAEDIATRIC AIRWAY TROLLEY: REVAMPED

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Introduction and aims

Elective and emergency paediatric airway management can be a stressful undertaking in any circumstance, particularly when those involved are not familiar with the equipment involved and the subtle but important differences in the airway of infants and young children.

Our aims were to:

- Standardise paediatric airway trolleys in our DGH operating theatres
- Introduce equipment needed for emergency surgical airway access
- Familiarise staff involved in the care of these patients with the above changes

Methods

We developed a stock list for paediatric airway trolleys, following the DAS guidelines¹ of Drawer A, B, C etc. We then ensured all pieces of kit needed were in the correct drawer and placed this stock list on the top of each trolley.

For the surgical access trolley, we designed a stock list as well and placed all relevant pieces of kit in the appropriate drawer. A laminated guideline was printed and placed with the trolley for use in emergencies.

We educated theatre and ED staff of the changes we had made and made sure they knew where everything was located and how to use each piece of kit.

Results

Verbal feedback was positive, staff being happy that equipment they were not overly familiar with being standardized and easy to access in the elective and emergency setting. We will continue to monitor, ensuring the highest standards are met continuously.

Discussion

Paediatric airway emergencies are thankfully not common but this can lead to a false sense of security and the loss of skills to deal with them. This is of particular concern in a DGH with no access to specialist paediatric services and an ED that accepts paediatric patients.

Standardising airway trolleys and providing simple to follow stock lists and protocols help to simplify carrying out tasks, leading to improved patient safety and overall clinical care.

Reference:

1. DAS. 2018. Paediatric Difficult Airway Guidelines. Web page accessed 30/01/20 <das.uk.com/guidelines/paediatric-difficult-airway-guidelines>