The Anesthesia Mask Holder—An Effective Device to Ensure Proper Dispensing of Masks

To the Editor—The anesthesia mask is a critical component of the anesthesia supply cart. These masks, when placed over the patient's mouth and nose, are used to create a seal and provide controlled gases (e.g., oxygen or volatile anesthetic) to the patient without contamination of the room with gentle positive pressure when necessary. Selection of an appropriately sized (neonate, toddler, child, small adult, and adult) mask is imperative, and time is of the essence in choosing the proper size. Until recently in our institution, many masks were kept in a large clear plastic bag hung on the side of the supply cart. This required some fumbling through the bag to identify the proper, individually wrapped (clean) mask, which was difficult and time consuming during a procedure. In addition, efficient stocking of carts with an adequate number of various sized masks was complicated by the inability to identify readily the number and size of the masks already in the bag.

To address this problem, we created a mask holder that can be easily attached (either permanently or temporarily) to the back of an anesthesia supply cart. This allows a visible display of all available sizes of masks to enable easy counting, stocking, presentation, and accessibility of the masks. The design consists of nonferromagnetic bars with dowels attached to the cart (fig. 1). Each size mask can be placed on the dowels in any order, but, typically, masks of the same size are placed on the same dowel with masks of increasing size on successive dowels. The dowel size is small enough that the center hole of the mask fits onto it easily yet rounded at the tip so as not to pose a danger to the anesthetist's hand. The individual mask plastic bag is easily pierced, yet keeps the mask clean on the holder and ready for use. The holder does not interfere with the normal functioning of the cart, yet is easily accessible. The anesthesia mask holder is being used through-

Fig. 1. Anesthesia cart with mask holder.

out the Johns Hopkins Hospital to provide easy access to anesthesia masks on all pediatric/adult/remote anesthesia carts.

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(Accepted for publication December 17, 1998.)

Funding for the local production of the Anesthesia Mask Holder was supported by the Department of Anesthesiology/Critical Care Medicine, The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland.