Effective Topical Anesthesia for Awake Tracheal Intubation

To the Editor—We administered 2% lidocaine jelly (fig. 1) with a 10-ml syringe attached to a 4–5-inch long plastic suction catheter to the base of the tongue and pharynx of the patient. A total of up to 10 ml 2% lidocaine jelly is squirted on the tonsillar pillar area on each side. Administration of the topical anesthetic on the laryngeal side of the epiglottis and the larynx is avoided to preserve protective reflexes of the superior laryngeal nerve. The jelly, as opposed to solutions, adheres to the mucosal surfaces more effectively with quicker penetration. We see an almost immediate effect with the patients after application, allowing us to perform direct laryngoscopy and tracheal intubation smoothly.

Ivan Hronek, M.D.
Resident
Deepak Gupta, M.D.
Chief Resident, Department of Anesthesia
Young K. Choi, M.D., F.A.C.P.M.
Director, New Jersey Pain Institute
Assistant Professor
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
125 Paterson Street, Suite 6100
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901-1977

Reconciling Differences between In Vitro and In Vivo Effects of Propofol

To the Editor—Bansinath et al. reported the effects of propofol on seizures induced in mice by a variety of chemical agents.1 Chemoconvulsants, which putatively act on GABA, glycine, or glutamate receptor subtypes, were examined. The authors correctly emphasize the importance of using both in vivo and in vitro paradigms to understand the mechanism of anesthesia. However, they suggest that there is a disparity between their results and the information available from in vitro studies regarding the effects of propofol on excitatory amino acid receptors.

It is evident from Bansinath et al.’s table 3 that propofol reduced the incidence of NMDA-induced convulsions, and this anticonvulsant effect was observed at all concentrations of NMDA tested. Moreover, the slopes of the lines in the log-probit plot (their fig. 2C) were similar, suggesting that the anticonvulsant property of propofol was mediated in part through modulation of the NMDA receptor. The calculated effective dose of NMDA that induced seizures in 50% of mice was apparently similar in the presence or absence of propofol. These data are consistent with in vitro studies that indicate propofol...