Short reports


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Removal of fish bones from the throat

Patients with fish bones impacted in their throats commonly present to accident and emergency (A&E) departments and if the bones are not removed quickly they can produce serious sequelae. A plain radiograph may identify some bones, but this technique is unreliable as many commonly eaten fish (e.g. mackerel, trout and salmon) have radiolucent skeletons. Most retained fish bones are visible on initial examination of the oropharynx and are usually lodged in the base of the tongue, tonsils or posterior pharyngeal wall.

A simple method is described to remove fish bones impacted in the pharynx using instruments that are invariably available in every A&E department.

With the patient seated, the operator inserts the Magill laryngoscope as shown in Fig. 1. This gives an excellent view of the affected area and keeps the tongue retracted, leaving the operator's other hand free to remove the bone using Magill forceps.

REFERENCES


B. NATHAN, S. PREMACHANDRAN & K. HASHEMI
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Fig. 1. Removal of fish bones from a patient's throat using a Magill laryngoscope and Magill forceps.