EQUIPMENT REVIEW

The vitalograph emergency aspiration pump

This instrument was used for 2 weeks on the flying squad service of the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary. It is a hand-held and hand-powered pump made mainly of plastic with a 0.5-1 transparent reservoir. It is operated by a pumping trigger in the pistol grip. A suction catheter can be attached to the 'barrel', forming a rigid unit like a large pistol. A mesh filter lies between inlet and reservoir. Overflow occurs when the reservoir is full. It weighs 390 g and measures 16.5 cm in length by 8.7 cm diameter excluding the pistol grip.

Difficulty has been experienced obtaining efficient suction outside hospital. This pump provides one solution. The machine was found to be light, small and able to provide continuous or intermittent suction without causing fatigue. Suction was adequate to remove any debris encountered in the oropharynx. It fits into the glove compartment of a vehicle and so may appropriately be the first instrument on the scene. It can be dismantled, cleaned and reassembled in under a minute. Its apparent disadvantage is its plastic construction which may not withstand being trodden upon. However, it is cheap, costing £55.00. This department is acquiring them for all its flying squad vehicles.

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