A Machine Practical

Cortessa L. Russell, M.D.; Amy Ripley, M.D.; John Wasnick, M.D.
St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center

Learner Audience: Residency Program Directors, Educators, Attendings

Background: The anesthesia machine remains a source of mystery to anesthesia residents, and represents a dry topic of study. Yet intimate knowledge of the machine, as well as the physics behind some of the components, is a vital area of knowledge for any anesthesiologist to be able to troubleshoot the more common machine problems.

Needs Assessment: Assess the ability of residents to properly perform a machine checkout on a variety of anesthesia machines, to identify areas of malfunction and to troubleshoot and correct the more common problems.

Hypothesis: Although the residents use the machine daily, their functional knowledge is limited.

Curriculum Design: A machine practical was designed wherein a series of anesthesia machines were "bugged" with problems. Small groups of residents were given four minutes to perform a machine check, identify the problem and attempt to correct it. The buzzer would sound after four minutes, and the group would rotate to a different station, where they repeated the process. There were a total of 8 stations. Each station was either "bugged" with an easily identifiable problem, which had occurred in the careers of many of the attendings, or had a machine question related to that particular model.

Outcome: After the practical, the residents all admitted to a greater understanding of the machine and delivery system concepts.