Bilateral temporomandibular joint dislocation after upper gastrointestinal endoscopy in an intensive care unit patient: a rare complication

A 60-year-old man, without dental articulation disorders or a history of dislocation of the temporomandibular joint, was admitted to our intensive care unit after surgery for aortic dissection. He had been intubated without complication 4 days earlier. On the day of surgery, he was sedated with midazolam and sufentanyl, and received a neuromuscular blocker. Using a flexible endoscope, upper gastrointestinal endoscopy to rule out gastrointestinal bleeding was performed without technical difficulty. Immediately afterwards, examination demonstrated an inability to close the mouth and emptiness of the mandibular fossa. Bilateral temporomandibular joint dislocation (TMJD) was diagnosed and was corrected temporarily using the Nélaton maneuver. A subsequent computed tomography (CT) scan ruled out a fracture of the mandible and extend a forced opening of the jaw. When endoscopy is performed in ambulant patients [2–5], we report the first case in a patient intubated orotracheally and on prolonged sedation. Proposed risk factors for TMJD during endoscopy include general anesthesia, a hard inflexible mouthpiece, or a history of TMJD [3,6,7]. Here, the use of sedative drugs and neuromuscular blockers probably contributed to it, secondarily to increased laxity. The presence of an endotracheal tube may also exert a downward pressure on the mandible and extend a forced opening of the jaw. When endoscopy is performed on sedated and paralyzed patients, this complication may go undetected. TMJD must be corrected quickly, before the masseter muscle spasm worsens. After a failed correction, a mandibular fracture should be suspected and a CT scan performed [8].

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References

Bibliography
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Corresponding author
Diane Lorenzo, MD
Service de Réanimation Médicale
20 rue Leblanc
75015 Paris
France
Fax: +33-1-56093202
diane.lorenzo@gmail.com

Diane Lorenzo, Florence Boissier, Alexandra Prost, Claire Gallois, Christophe Faisy
Service de Réanimation Médicale, Hôpital Européen Georges Pompidou, Assistance-Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris, Paris, France

Fig. 1 Facial computed tomography (CT) scan with 3D reconstruction in a 60-year-old man after upper gastrointestinal endoscopy. On both sides, emptiness of the mandibular fossa, anterior mandibular condyle displacement (blue arrow), and dental asymmetry can be seen. a Left side; b right side.

Lorenzo Diane et al. Bilateral temporomandibular joint dislocation after upper gastrointestinal endoscopy... Endoscopy 2014; 46: E538