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Revival of the Polio Laryngoscope Blade

To the Editor:—In 1956, the Polio Macintosh laryngoscope blade* was specifically designed for poliomyelitis patients, placed in iron lung machines, who required direct laryngoscopy for tracheal intubation. With the advent of simpler mechanical ventilators, this laryngoscope blade has fallen into disuse.

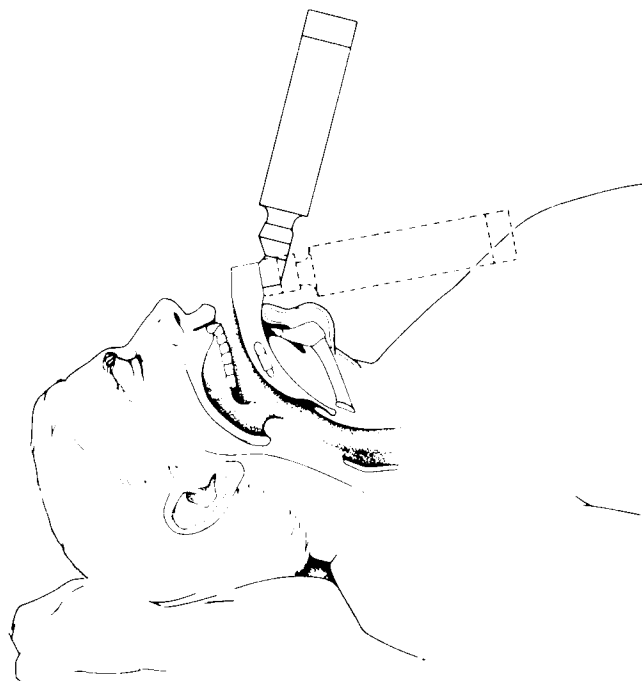
However, there are other conditions which similarly make the proper insertion of a laryngoscope blade difficult, and where the Polio blade can be helpful. Obesity with marked mammary gland hypertrophy, kyphosis with severe barrel chest deformity, short neck and restricted mobility of the neck due to a cervical collar or halo-femoral frame, all fall in this category. We have found the Macintosh Polio laryngoscope blade distinctly advantageous when presented with these anatomic problems.

The difference in design of the Polio blade is demonstrated in figure 1. It is connected to the laryngoscope handle at an obtuse angle, whereas standard blades are attached at a right angle. The problem of the handle impinging on the chest of the patient can thus be obviated, and direct laryngoscopy facilitated.

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* The Macintosh Polio laryngoscope blade is manufactured and available from the Foregger Company.



Difference in design of the Polio laryngoscope blade.

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Adult Epiglottitis Revisited

To the Editor:—We recently reviewed in ANESTHESIOLOGY our experience with epiglottitis in the adult.¹ We intubated four of five patients and urged early endotracheal intubation as a practical and potentially life-saving maneuver in these patients. Since our report, two more cases have occurred in our institution, one of which is dramatic enough to be worth sharing with the readers of ANESTHESIOLOGY.

A 25-year-old woman developed respiratory distress after having a sore throat and fever for two days. Her respiratory distress became severe enough to cause her companion to phone the emergency paramedic team. In the two minutes it took for the team to arrive, the patient lost consciousness and her companion attempted unsuccessfully to perform a tracheostomy. The paramedics found a cyanotic patient with agonal respiratory