The Journal of Laryngology & Otology

cambridge.org/jlo

Tonsillectomy: an old operation revisited

Jonathan Fishman and Edward Fisher

Editorial

Cite this article: Fishman J, Fisher E. Tonsillectomy: an old operation revisited. *J Laryngol Otol* 2023;**137**:709–709. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022215123001093

Received: 8 June 2023
Accepted: 8 June 2023

Tonsillectomy has featured highly in recent weeks following the publication of the NAtional randomised controlled Trial of Tonsillectomy IN Adults ('NATTINA'), which concluded that, compared with conservative management, immediate tonsillectomy is clinically effective and cost-effective in adults with recurrent acute tonsillitis.[1] The discussion around tonsillectomy is continued in this month's issue of *The Journal of Laryngology & Otology*.

Post-tonsillectomy haemorrhage should not be underestimated. For example, in the recently published 'NATTINA' trial, the most common adverse event was post-operative bleeding (19 per cent haemorrhage rate in adults). Post-tonsillectomy haemorrhage has long been attributed to post-operative infection. However, there is a paucity of evidence to support this hypothesis and the associated use of antibiotics in the current literature. Williamson *et al*., in this month's issue, systematically review the aetiology, role of infection, as well as the role of antibiotics in post-tonsillectomy haemorrhage.[2]

The World Health Organization recently announced that coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) is no longer a public health emergency of international concern.[3] Nonetheless, given the risk of future respiratory virus epidemics and pandemics, it remains vital that we continue to study how viruses spread, the impact of aerosol production and the risk posed by many procedures. Sanmark *et al*., in this month's issue, measured and compared the aerosol generated between electrocautery and cold steel tonsillectomy.[4] The authors found that bipolar electrocautery generated significantly higher concentrations of aerosol compared with cold steel dissection. Although a small study, their results support cold dissection as the primary tonsillectomy technique, particularly during epidemics of airborne diseases.

References

1 Wilson JA, O'Hara J, Fouweather T, Homer T, Stocken DD, Vale L, et al. Conservative management versus tonsillectomy in adults with recurrent acute tonsillitis in the UK (NATTINA): a multicentre, open-label, randomised controlled trial. *Lancet* 2023;**S0140-6736**(23)00519-6. Epub 2023 May 17
2 Williamson A, Coleman H, Douglas C. Does infection play a role in post-tonsillectomy haemorrhage? A narrative review. *J Laryngol Otol* 2023;**137**:710–717
3 World Health Organization. Statement on the fifteenth meeting of the IHR (2005) Emergency Committee on the COVID-19pandemic. In: www.who.int/news/item/05-05-2023-statement-on-the-fifteenth-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-pandemic [9 June 2023]
4 Sanmark E, Rantanen N, Oksanen LM, Matvejeff AT, Möller R, Geneid A. Comparison of aerosol generation between electrocautery and cold dissection tonsillectomy. *J Laryngol Otol* 2023;**137**:732–740

© The Author(s), 2023. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of J.L.O. (1984) LIMITED

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022215123001093 Published online by Cambridge University Press