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Short Communication

The tonsil cup: a simple teaching aid for tonsillectomy

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Abstract
A simple and inexpensive simulator to assist in the teaching of tonsillectomy is presented.

Key words: Teaching materials; Tonsillectomy

Introduction

Training in basic surgical skills as an early part of surgical training is now well established in the UK, indeed it is a requirement for the M.R.C.S. or Associate Fellowship examinations (RCS, 1995). Synthetic simulators have been shown to be a useful and effective training aid (Thomas *et al.*, 1996) yet skills specific to some specialities have hitherto received little attention. We present a simple and inexpensive simulator that facilitates practising ligation of bleeding vessels as a part of tonsillectomy.

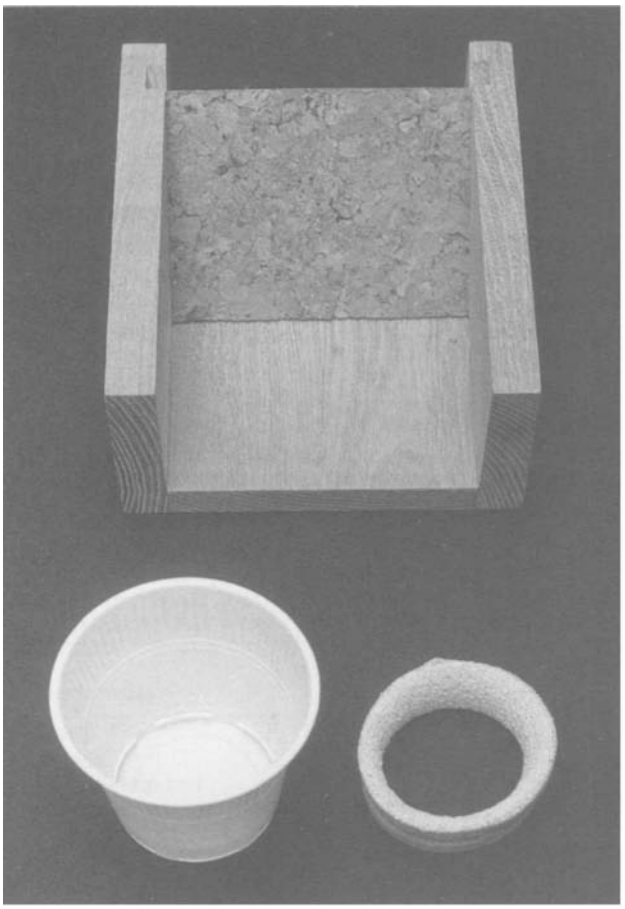


Fig. 1
Component parts of tonsil cup.

Description of tonsil cup

The basic parts of the simulator are a 200 ml plastic vending machine cup and a length of 5 cm gauze. A 2.5 cm

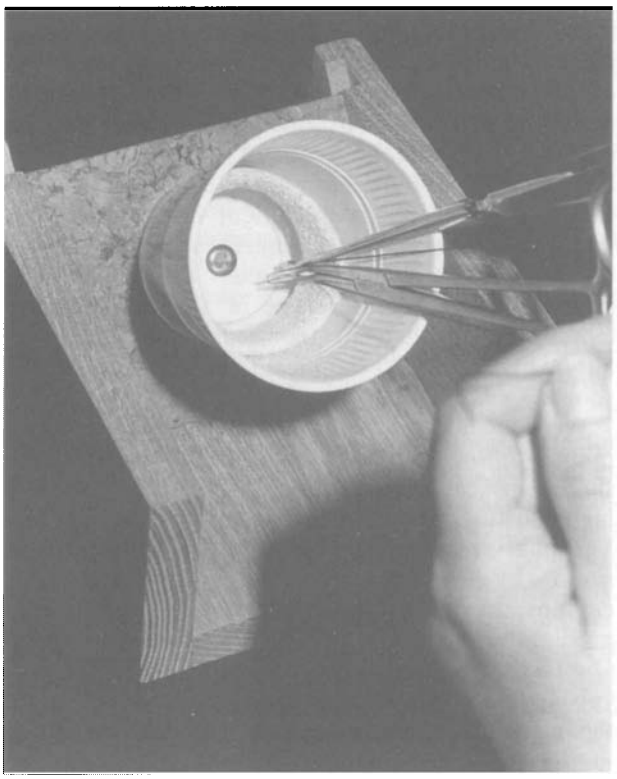


Fig. 2
Tonsil cup in use.

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collar is cut from the bottom of a second cup. The gauze is inserted around the inner surface of the collar, turned over the edges and held in place by adhesive tape (Figure 1). This 'tonsil bed' is then inserted in the first cup close to the bottom. The assembly is held at an angle of 45° – we have constructed a wood and cork framework allowing the cup to be secured by a drawing pin through the base.

The size and shape of the cup approximate to the dimensions of the adult mouth. The gauze may be picked up and ligatures tied in the usual manner using Negus forceps, etc (Figure 2).

Conclusion

Our device allows trainees to practise the technique of ligation of bleeding vessels in the tonsil bed safely and at minimal cost. Its use is commended to new trainees in the speciality.

References

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