

Safety Updates from the Anesthesia Closed Claims Project

2017

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Dr. Alan Jay Schwartz: Hello. This is Alan Jay Schwartz, Editor-in-Chief of the American Society of Anesthesiologists' 2017 *Refresher Courses in Anesthesiology*, the latest research and educational findings. The focus of the *Refresher Courses in Anesthesiology*'s CME program and the modules featured is to educate learners on current developments in the science and clinical practice of the specialty of anesthesiology. Returning for a second year, we will be speaking directly with individual authors to learn about their expertise, perspective and insight regarding the featured module.

Today, we are pleased to present the following one-on-one conversation with Dr. Karen Domino, and we'll be highlighting the module titled "Safety Updates from the Anesthesia Closed Claims Project."

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Dr. Alan Jay Schwartz: We're very fortunate today to be talking with Dr. Karen Domino, Professor and Vice Chair for Clinical Research in the Department of Anesthesiology at the University of Washington. Dr. Domino has been involved with the Anesthesia Closed Claims Project for many years, and we're delighted that this year in the 2017 Refresher Course program she's written a module for safety updates from the Anesthesia Closed Claims Project. Dr. Domino, please tell our listeners a couple of the key educational concepts from the current Closed Claims Project.

Dr. Karen Domino: Well, we reviewed over 2,900 claims from the year 2000 and later, to current times, in order to see what kind of safety problems are still remaining in anesthesia. We found several interesting findings.

One of the findings is that we're seeing operating room fires still occurring. These are primarily during use of supplemental oxygen, during monitored anesthesia care for procedures that we would call high-fire-risk, which are ones in the shoulders, the face, the neck, and the back of the head, with the use of an electrocautery. It's surprising these are now occurring in 4% of anesthesia claims and that they're totally preventable, and APSF and the ASA both have excellent advisories and materials online about how to prevent these from occurring. The basic issue is one of communication of the entire operating room team, and incorporating this into a pre-procedure checklist or time out.

Another interesting finding that we've had, that we reported in *Anesthesiology* a few years ago, is dealing with unexpected hemorrhage during surgery. And it has become an area of liability for anesthesiologists, particularly during obstetrics, spine surgery, and minimally-invasive surgery. We find that improved team communication and organized hemorrhage response protocols have the potential to improve the management of unexpected hemorrhage.

Finally, we have the issue of, during monitored anesthesia care, of monitoring respiratory function and that, even though the ASA has incorporated this into use of capnography as a standard during monitored anesthesia care, we are still seeing claims due to inadequate oxygenation due to inadequate ventilation during monitored anesthesia care, often in the non-operating-room areas, and that capnography should have been used as it may improve the ability to diagnose inadequate ventilation during monitored anesthesia care. I think these findings are just some of the things that I discuss in this lecture.

Dr. Alan Jay Schwartz: Thank you very much, Dr. Domino. The ASA Closed Claims Project—you and your colleagues have worked on that for many years and provided us important information for patient safety. I encourage our listeners to read the entire 2017 Refresher Course in Anesthesiology module that you’ve put together, “Safety Updates from the Anesthesia Closed Claims Project,” and of course hope that our listeners will read not only Dr. Domino’s module but all of the modules of the 2017 *Refresher Courses in Anesthesiology* publication.

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Dr. Alan Jay Schwartz: Thank you for joining us today and participating in this insightful conversation with this month’s featured author. Be sure to join us for next month’s one-on-one author interview. To purchase the full subscription of the 2017 *Refresher Courses in Anesthesiology* program, please visit www.asahq.org, click on the Shop ASA link, and search for RCA.

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