

COMPLICATION OF HARD CERVICAL COLLARS IN MULTI-TRAUMA PATIENTS

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All multi-trauma patients with suspected cervical spine injury should have their cervical spine protected while other life-threatening injuries are being managed. The application of a hard cervical collar is an acceptable method of temporarily immobilizing the cervical spine. Two cases of significant occipital pressure ulceration associated with the use of hard cervical collar are presented.

SELECTED QUOTATIONS

Abstract

“Two cases of significant occipital pressure ulceration associated with the use of hard cervical collar are presented.” (Pg. 139)

Case 1

During this period, “his [the patients] spine was immobilized with a hard cervical collar... on day 6 an occipital pressure ulcer was noted” (Pg. 139)

“The cervical collar was eventually removed on day 8. At this stage an occipital pressure ulcer of 8 x 4 cm was noted, requiring surgical excision and primary closure” (Pgs. 139-140)



Fig 1: Large occipital pressure ulcer from hard cervical collar

Case 2

“Her [the patients] cervical spine was immobilized with a hard cervical collar at all time.” (Pg. 140)

“The cervical traction and collar were removed on day 10... An occipital pressure ulcer measuring 4 x 2 was noted, which required multiple surgical debridements and regular saline dressings.” (Pg. 140)

“The ulcer eventually healed after 3 weeks.” (Pg. 140)

Discussion

“Both [patients] were managed with a hard cervical collar... Both developed significant pressure ulcers requiring additional surgical intervention in the operating theatre.” (Pg. 140)

“In both cases, the ulcer was directly related to the cervical collar.” (Pg. 140)

“The same problem is obviously not encountered by the soft collar...” (Pg. 140)