

CODE: All
 Question: Airway Type: Urgent/Emergent Author: Dr. L. Brownell

Opening Scenario:

22 yr. old woman with abscess in right side of neck below the mandible. Swelling and erythema up to cheek and down to clavicle (crosses midline). Surgeon wishes to perform incision and drainage. How would you proceed?

Major points of additional information to be provided to the candidate, e.g., hx, px, labs, x-ray, consults:

T38⁵, H.R.105, B.P. 90/60, R.R.28, 48kg. Needle tracks arms, legs and neck. Admitted I.V. drug user. Pt. is uncooperative and abusive. Cannot open mouth due to pain and swelling. Cannot lie flat, "hard to breathe."

Major decision points (major decision points or options which must be recognized by the candidate)

Recognize problems - difficult airway. Potential airway obstruction (urgency). Problems with I.V. drug use (withdrawal, narcotic dosage, infection). Problem with lack of cooperation. Problem with infection overlying trachea re: surgical airway.

Any followup information required to lead to the end of the question

Uncooperative - alternative plan (e.g., sedation. ? L.A. topical/injected. Abscess ruptures in mouth with intubation attempt. Plan of action in response?

Critical features to be included i.e. the *must* have to pass the question or to be considered *completely* unacceptable

Recognition of conflicting problems - lack of cooperation, impending airway obstruction. Reasoned approach with alternatives if first line fails.
 Knowledge of withdrawal syndrome and acute lung toxicity.

Ref: RCEXAMAT.FORM June, 95

USED:

Last Revision: 95/10