

CLINICAL "SNIPPETS"

"Unrecognized misplacement of endotracheal tubes by ground prehospital providers."

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Overview: This prospective consecutive case observational study examined the records of all EMS patients who had been intubated in the field or were intubated within 10 minutes of arrival at their emergency department (ED). 192 patients were enrolled. 132 (69%) were intubated prior to arrival. 12 (9%) of the tubes were found to be misplaced, 11 in the esophagus and one in the hypopharyngeal (just above the cords) space, and 20 (15%) where the tube was in the right mainstem bronchus. Only one patient with a misplaced tube survived to hospital discharge.

Conclusion: Because of the rate of esophageal misplacement the benefits of pre-hospital airway management does not clearly supersede the potential risks."