

M.G. VANNINI  
OSPEDALE RELIGIOSO  
CLASSIFICATO ACCREDITATO  
ISTITUTO FIGLIE DI SAN CAMILLO

## Gli ultrasuoni nella Gestione delle Vie Aeree



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Direttore U.O.C Anestesiologia e Rianimazione

# DICHIARAZIONE CONFLITTO DI INTERESSI

In qualità di docente/relatore/tutor, ai sensi dell'art. 3.3 sul Conflitto di Interessi, pag. 18,19 dell'Accordo Stato-Regione del 19 aprile 2012, per conto del Provider SIAARTI ID 205

dichiaro

che negli ultimi due anni non ho avuto rapporti anche di finanziamento con soggetti portatori di interessi commerciali in campo sanitario.

El-Ganzouri et al.

## Preoperative airway assessment: predictive value of a multivariate risk index.

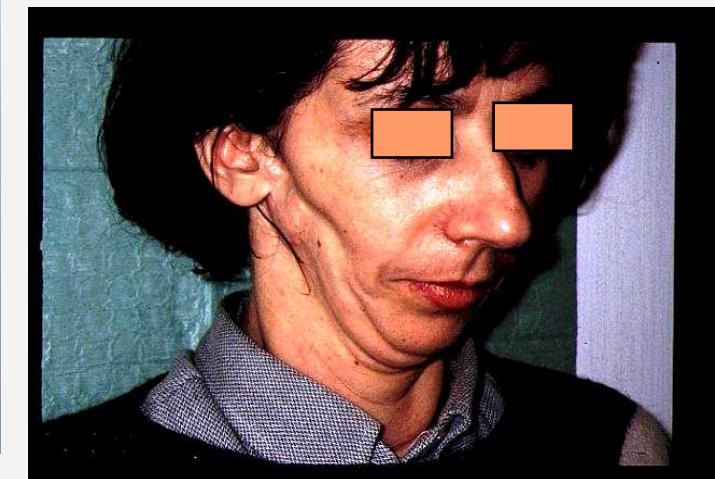
*Anesth Analg 1996; 82: 1197-204*

**Table 4 El-Ganzouri score**

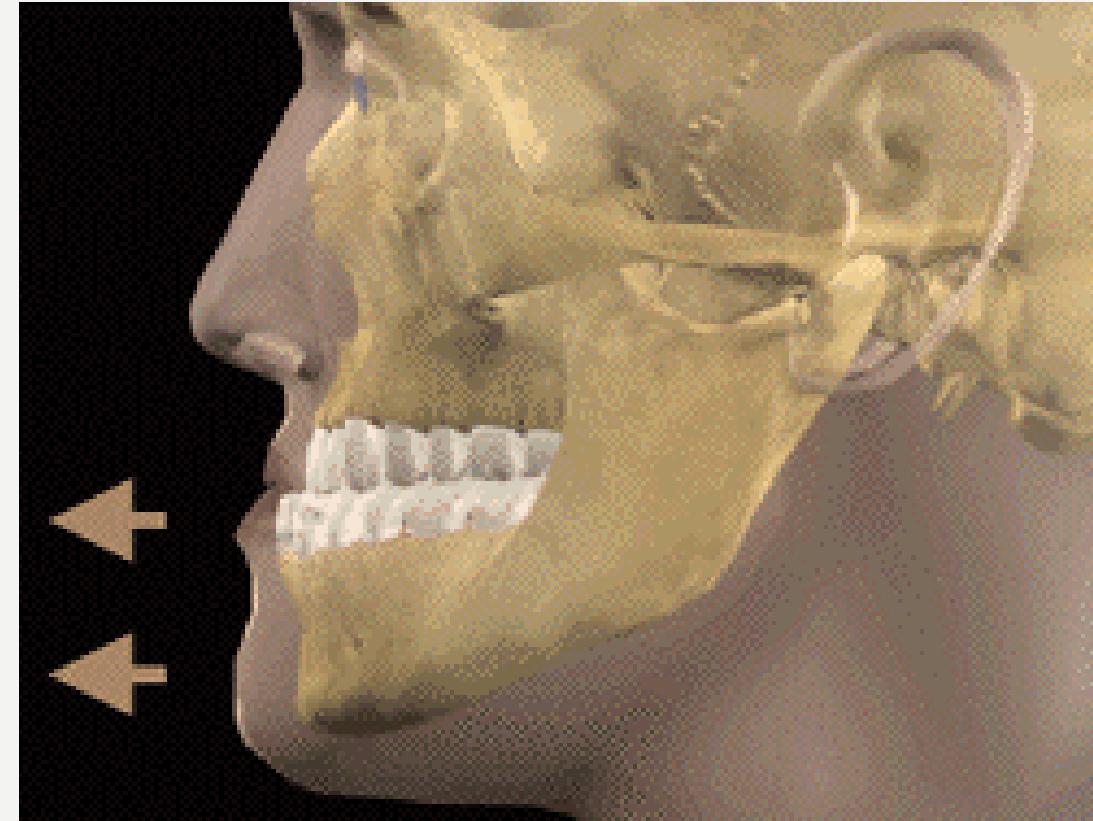
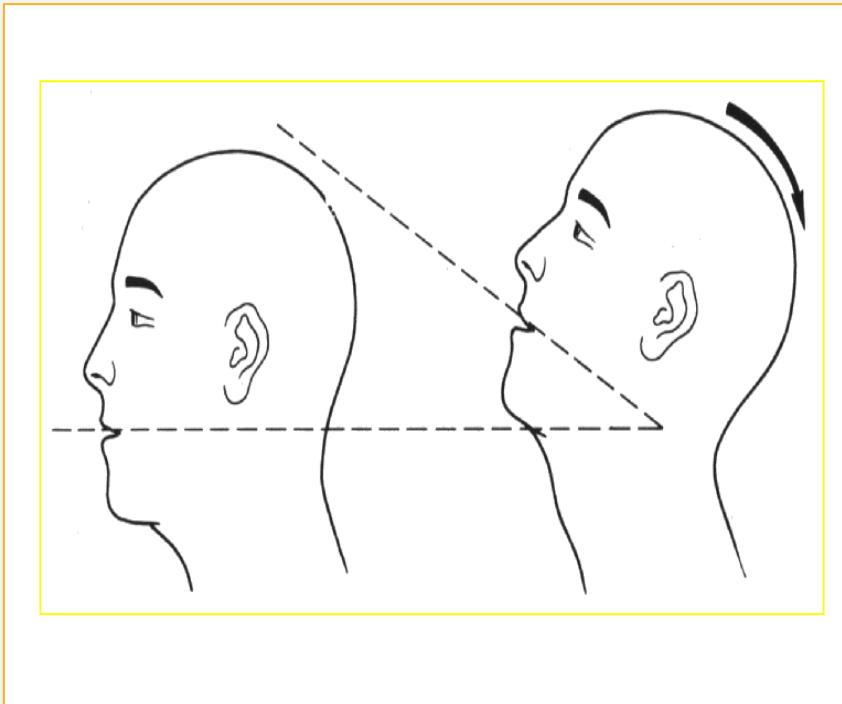
Criterion	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2
Weight (kg)	< 90	90 to 110	> 110
Head and neck mobility (°)	< 90	90 ± 10	< 80
Mouth opening (cm)	≥ 4	< 4	
Subluxation > 0	Possible	Not possible	
Thyromental distance (cm)	> 6.5	6 to 6.5	< 6
Mallampati classification	1	2	3
History of difficult intubation	no	possible	established

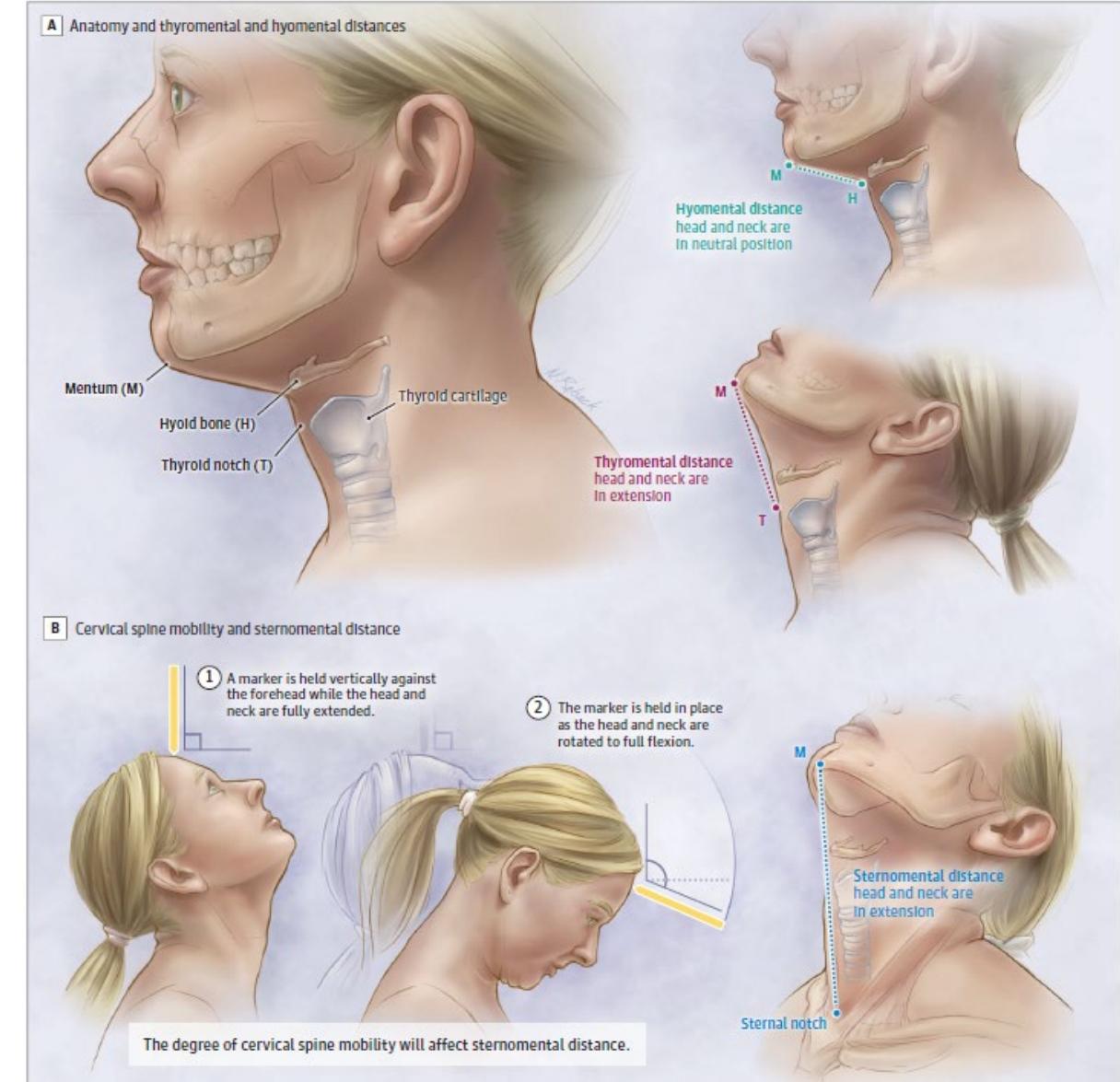
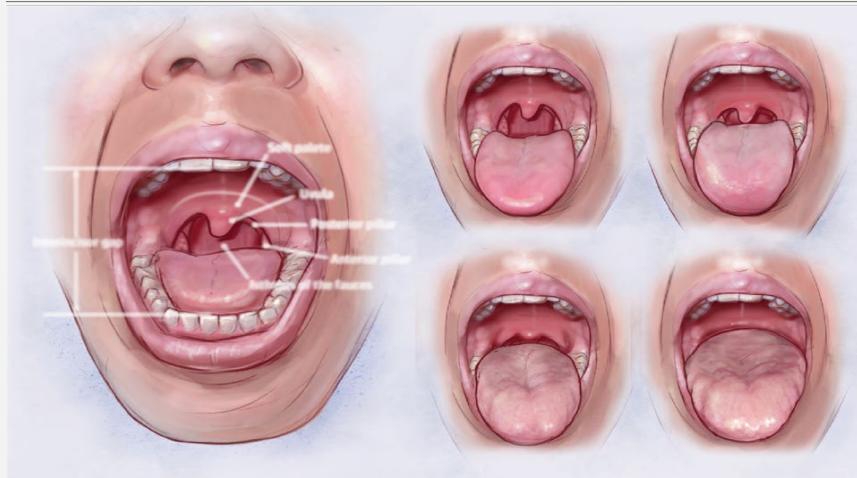
Modified from El-Ganzouri et al.<sup>470</sup>

# Weak Chin



# Functional test



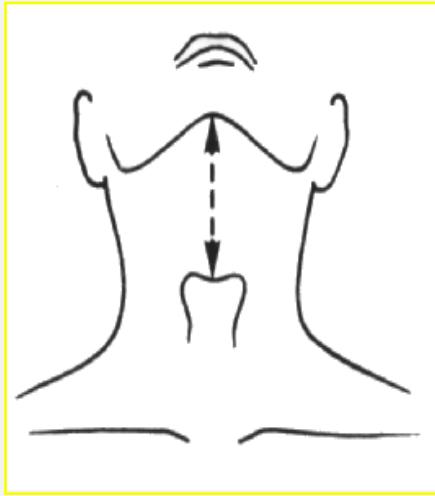


# **DIFFICOLTA' INTUBATORIA PREVISTA SU 1 SOLO PARAMETRO**

## **CRITERI ASSOLUTI**

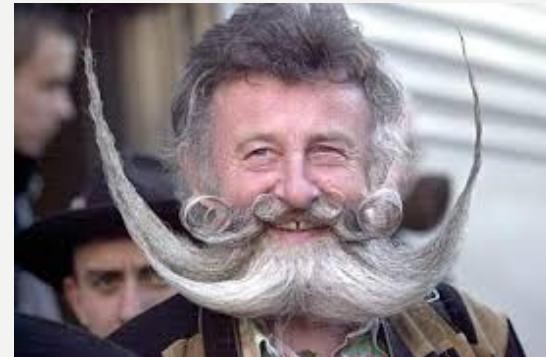
- 1. MALLAMPATI 4** (*con fonazione*)
- 2. TIRO-MENTONIERA < 6 cm**
- 3. INTERINCISIVA < 3 cm** (*INTERINCISIVA < 2 cm = standard impossibile*)
- 4. COLLO RIGIDO IN FLESSIONE**
- 5. PROGNATISMO MASCELLARE 1 cm** (*non correggibile*)

# **DIFFICOLTA' VENTILATORIA IN MASCHERA FACCIALE**



**DISTANZA  
DI PATIL**

**Obesità**



**CRITERI DI PREVISIONE**

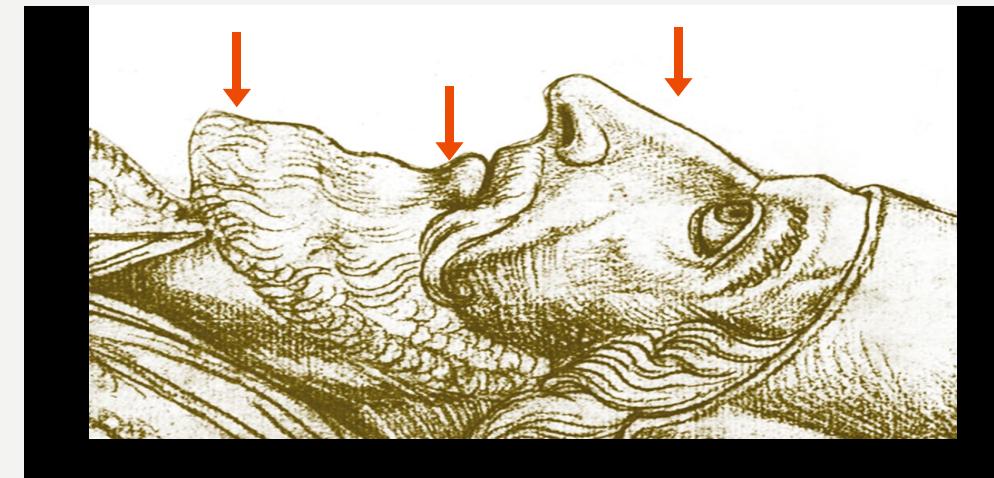
**Mallampati 4**

**Presenza di barba**

**Russamento e sleep apnea**

**Edentulia**

**Naso grosso**



## *Dati epidemiologici*

Una ventilazione in maschera difficile si associa  
spesso ad una difficoltà di intubazione

( rischio di ID 4 volte superiore, di IT  
impossibile 12 volte superiore)

Prediction of difficult mask ventilation. *Anesthesiology* 2000, 92:1229-36. Langeron o et al.

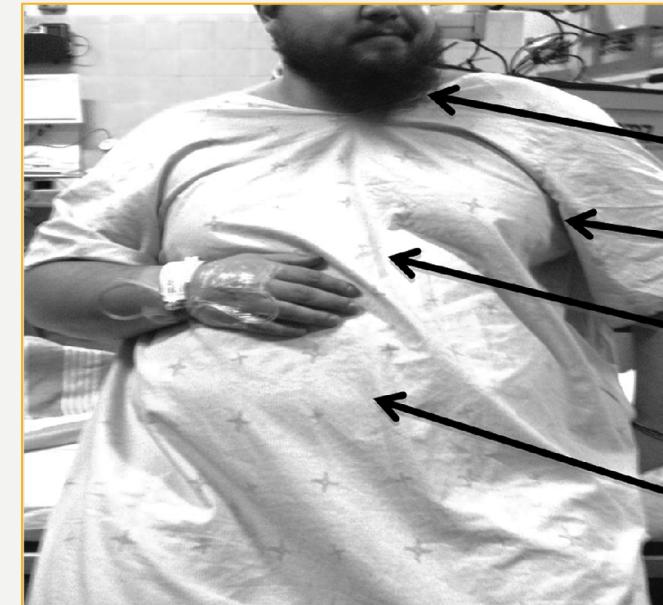
# Specific indexes for obese patients

► Neck circumference 41 cm/43 cm

► Whaist to hip ratio> 0,8/0,9

► STOP-BANG >5

► BMI>50



Increased pharyngeal, neck, and occipital tissue leading to difficult ventilation and intubation

Increased breast tissue interfering with airway instruments

Decreased chest wall compliance, FRC, and VC. Increased O<sub>2</sub> consumption, WOB, all leading to rapid desaturation

Increased abdominal pressure

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Minerva Anestesiologica 2017 November;83(11)

Obesità e buone pratiche cliniche perioperatorie/ periprocedurali: Consensus SIAARTI 2016

A cura di: Ida DI GIACINTO <sup>1</sup>, Rita CATALDO <sup>2</sup>, Clelia ESPOSITO <sup>3</sup>, Flavia PETRINI <sup>4</sup>, Paolo PELOSI <sup>5</sup>, Guido MERLI <sup>6,7</sup>, Massimiliano SORBELLO <sup>8,9</sup>  
per la Obesity Task Force del Gruppo di Studio SIAARTI Gestione delle Vie Aeree

### VALUTAZIONE PREOPERATORIA

**S** SCRING (FLUSSAMENTO): Russa sonoramente (tanto forte da essere sentito attraverso le porte chiuse o il suo partner la sveglia durante la notte?)

**T** TIRED (STANCHEZZA): Si sente spesso stanco, affaticato o assonnato durante il giorno (es.: abbastanza stanco da addormentarsi mentre guida?)

**O** OBSERVED (OSER/AZIONE): Qualcuno ha osservato che smette di respirare o soffoca/rimane senza fiato durante il sonno?

**P** PRESSURE (PRESSIONE): È iperteso o assume terapia antiipertensiva?

**B** BM: Indice di massa corporea superiore a 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup>?

**A** AGE (ETA'): Età > di 50 anni?

**N** NECK (COLLO): Il collo (misurato al pomo d'Adamo) è grosso? Per gli uomini: il colletto della sua camicia misura 43 cm o più? Per le donne: il colletto della sua camica misura 41 cm o più?

**G** GENDER (SESSO): Maschile?

**<5**

**25**

**INCASO DI UNO PIÙ DEI SEGUENTI:** (SIAARTI-AMSI Raccomandazioni 2012)

- METS ≤ 4
- ECG/PATologICO
- CARDIOTASSIA IPERTENSIVA / SCHEMA
- SpO<sub>2</sub> < 94% IN ARIA AMBIENTE
- ASMA - EPICO (poco controllata), WHEEZING
- PREGRESSA TYP
- PREGRESSA EP

Anestesista con competenze specifiche – Team esperto  
Se chirurgia maggiore: elevare il livello di assistenza

**OBESITÀ PERIFERICA (PERA)**  
valutare comorbilità

**OBESITÀ CENTRALE (MELA)**  
RISCHIO MAGGIORI:  
Complicanze cardio-circolatorie / TVP-EP  
Sindrome metabolica  
Ventilazione difficile  
Possibile intubazione difficile

**SICUREZZA DELLE VIE Aeree**

**INDICATORI DI RISCHIO STANDARD**  
Manuale Ministeriale per la Sicurezza in Sala Operatoria  
SIAARTI «Raccomandazioni per la gestione delle vie aeree» (2005)

**INDICATORI DI RISCHIO SPECIFICO:**  
Circosfera addome: D > 41 - U > 43  
OSA (notta o sospetta) – OHS  
WHR: D > 0.8 - U > 0.9

**PIANIFICARE una STRATEGIA di GESTIONE DELLE VIE Aeree in caso di:**  
Difficoltà di ossigenazione, di ventilazione, di laringoscopia

**ESTUBAZIONE IN SICUREZZA**

**VALUTARE LE ATTREZZATURE E LE COMPETENZE DEL TEAM**  
PIANIFICARE IL PERCORSO CLINICO-ASSISTENZIALE  
MIGLIORARE L'APPROCCIO MULTIDISCIPLINARE  
REGISTRARE SULLA DOCUMENTAZIONE CLINICA I DATI E LE STRATEGIE ATTUATE

**VALUTARE idoneità per Day Surgery**  
Procedere SEMPRE in MAC

**PREVEDERE ALERT PER MODULARE IL LIVELLO DI ASSISTENZA**

### GESTIONE INTRAOPERATORIA

**DOTAZIONI SPECIFICHE**

- Letto, sedia a rotelle, barella e tavolo operatorio adeguati e con supporti specifici (per dimensione e peso) – pedana per l'anestetista
- Dispositivi di movimentazione – personale in numero adeguato per posizionamento e trasporto
- Presidi antidebuto/anticaduta appropriati – indumenti adeguati (per dimensioni) per il rispetto della dignità dei pazienti
- Bracciale per NBP di misura adeguata – aghi lunghi per accessi vascolari e/o ALR
- Presidi per posizione ramped – presidi per vie aeree difficili (presidi extragottici di 2<sup>a</sup> generazione – VDL – FBS – introduttore – scambiabili – set di controllo)
- Monitoraggio: NMB – EtCO<sub>2</sub> (anche per NORA) – considerare il monitoraggio della profondità dell'anestesia (rischio awareness)
- Ventilatore che consente tecniche controllate, assistite o spontanee con PEEP/CAP
- Presidi a compressione intermittente per profilassi della TVP
- Disponibilità di corvofo

**POSIZIONE RAMPED**  
(tragò attivo dello stomo)  
per induzione/intubazione/estubazione

**GESTIONE DELL'ANESTESIA**

- Valutare profilassi anticoag., antireflusso, antiemetica ed antibiotica
- Monitorare: glicemia - temperatura - volemia
- Prevenire le lesioni da debutto: se possibile, far posizionare il paziente da solo sul letto operatorio
- Valutare se utilizzare presidi alternativi al tubo endotracheale
- Planificare la strategia in caso di difficoltà di gestione delle vie aeree
- Valutare il rischio delle procedure in analgesodewell e respiro spontaneo (apnea)
- Posizione ramped per preossigenazione (± THRIVE nCPAP/NPPV in maschera) e per intubazione
- Minimizzare il tempo di apnea durante l'induzione per evitare la desaturazione
- Passare rapidamente alla fase di mantenimento (rischio awareness)
- Impostare ventilazione protettiva
- Privilegiare farmaci a breve durata d'azione - analgesia multimodale
- Considerare blocco neuromuscolare profondo - monitoraggio NMB
- Applicare una strategia di estubazione protetta (includendo posizione semi-seduta 25-30°)

Privilegiare tecniche chirurgiche MINI-INVASIVE

**CONSIDERARE SPECIALI PRECAUZIONI PER LA PAZIENTE OBESA GRAVIDA**

- Effettuare precoce la valutazione anestesiologica
- Ricorrere prontamente alla tecnica epidurale (supporto ecografico)
- Considerare il rischio di "accesso lombare difficile"
- Non considerare ALR come alternativa ad una difficoltà prevista di intubazione e/o ventilazione
- Considerare FBS da sveglia

**Criteri di dimissibilità SO-RR - PACU - NORA**

Criteri STANDARD	Criteri SPECIA
Ministero della Salute	+ SpO <sub>2</sub> quanto più vicina possibile al valore preoperatorio con la minima supplementazione di ossigeno
Locati (ospedale)	Assenza di ipovolimia (ipopnea/apnea per almeno 1 ora) ALERT in caso di difficile gestione delle vie aeree

### ASSISTENZA POSTOPERATORIA

#### INTENSITÀ ASSISTENZIALE

Adeguare il Livello di Cura (I, II, III) a:

- Comorbilità
- Complessità della procedura
- Rischio di ipo/diventilazione

L'assistenza in reparto include le CONSEGNE per:

- Analgesia multimodale
- Posizione semi-seduta 25-30°
- Mobilizzazione e fisioterapia precoce
- Profilassi TVP opportunamente protetta
- I Sorveglianza e monitoraggio se utilizzo di sedativi a lunga durata d'azione o oppiaceti
- O criteri di preallarme (modello NBN)
- Prevenzione diagnosi precoce e trattamento della rabboididisi
- Profilassi e controllo delle infezioni

**Precauzioni in caso di OSA/OHS**

- Mantenere posizione semi-seduta 25-30°
- Evitare sedativi o oppiaceti
- Valutare con attenzione la somministrazione di ossigeno – riprendere nCPAP se già in uso
- Monitoraggio SpO<sub>2</sub>: in pazienti non trattati/intolleranti nCPAP se utilizzati oppiaceti
- In caso di crisi, adeguare il livello di cura: passare a II (con disponibilità di letto di livello III)

**IN CASO DI DIFFICILE GESTIONE DELLE VIE Aeree**

- Ripetere le informazioni nella documentazione clinica ed anestesiologica
- CONSEGNE – modulo di ALERT al reparto ed al paziente

**ALERT SPECIFICI PER LA TERAPIA INTENSIVA (Livello III - UTI)**

- Team esperto per la gestione delle vie aeree difficili nel paziente critico in emergenza
- Tracheotomia: Valutare timing / difficoltà (tecnica percutanea/chirurgica) / scelta della cannuola
- Ventilazione protetta
- Attrezza e risorse umane adeguate per mobilitazione frequente e prevenzione dei decubiti
- Precoce riabilitazione
- Organizzazione adeguata in caso di trasporto secondario

#### PRECAUZIONI SPECIFICHE

**IMPLEMENTAZIONE DI PROTOCOLLI ERAS**

**GRAVIDANZA (PUNTO NASCITA)**

"SICUREZZA MATERNO-INFANTILE" - ALERT analgesia – anestesia e precauzioni per il post-partum

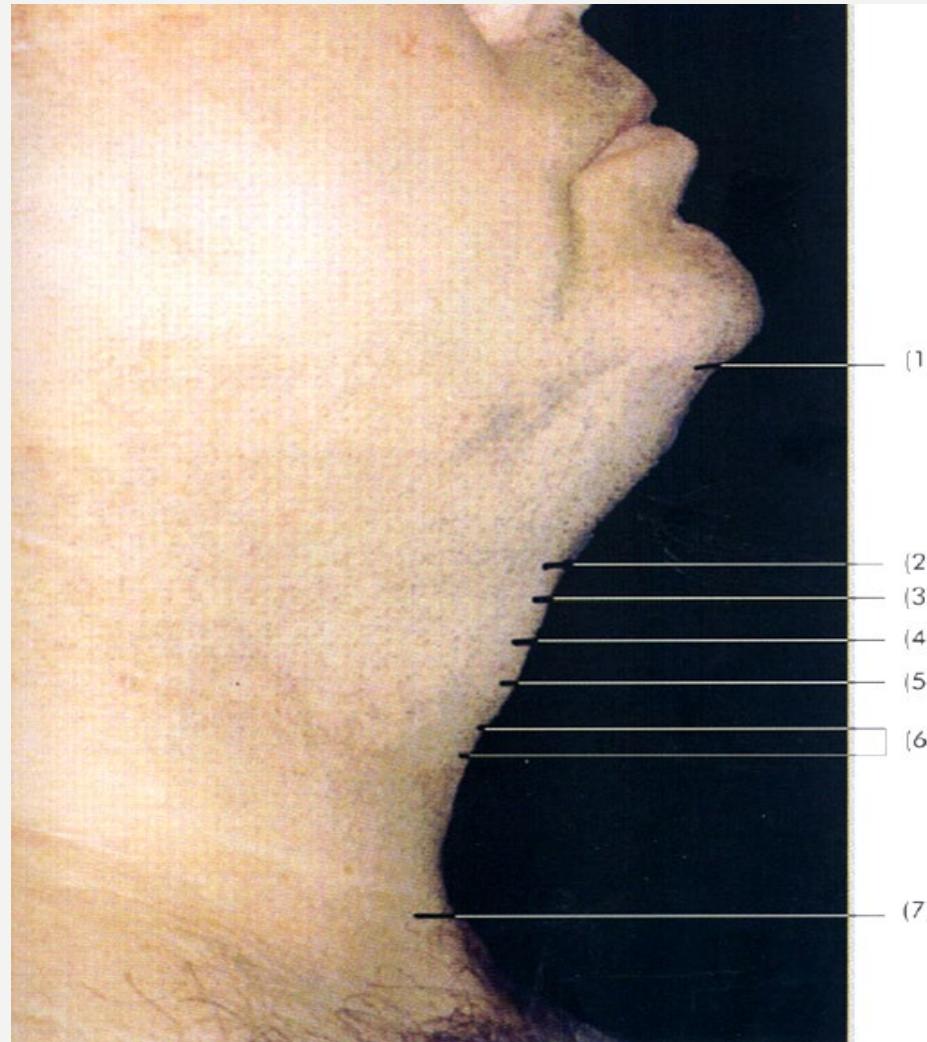
**SISTEMA DI RISPOSTA RAPIDA ALLE EMERGENZE INTRA-OSPEDALIERE**

O criteri operativi di Alert: precoce – Attrezza e risorse umane adeguate e competenze del team delle emergenze

**ALERT IN DEA**

- Prevedere supporti, sistemi di movimentazione, attrezza e dispositivi a dimensioni/peso dei pazienti
- Precoce allertamento del MET per la valutazione del rischio di vie aeree difficili: competenze-dispositivi ed abilità nelle tecniche in emergenza
- Particolari attenzioni per l'assistenza durante il trasporto secondario (Ambulanza Biocottero)

# REPERI ANATOMICI

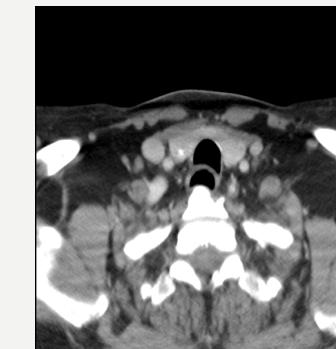
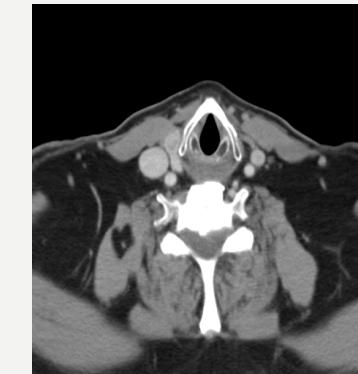
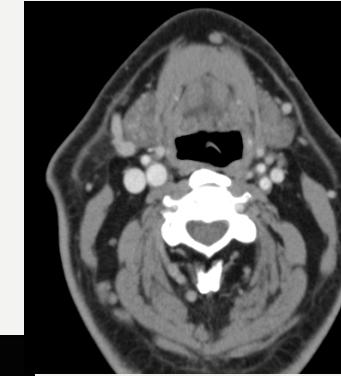
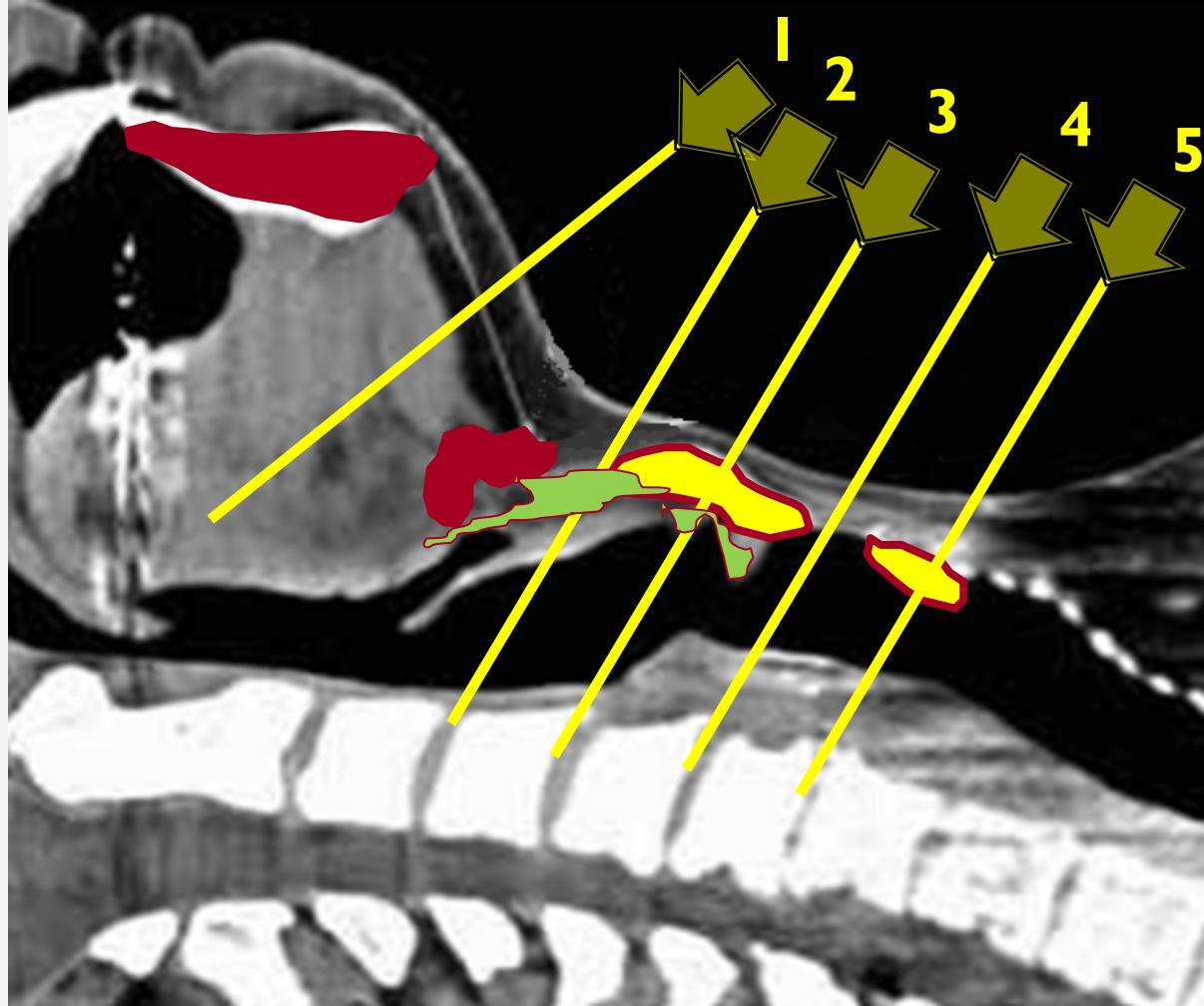


1. Mandible
2. Hyoid bone
3. Thyoide cartilage
4. Cricothyroide membrane
5. Cricoide cartilage
6. Tracheal rings
7. Jugulus



**Comparison of Sonography and Computed Tomography as Imaging Tools for Assessment of Airway Structures. Arun Prasad, MBBS, DA, FRCA, FRCPC, Eugene Yu, MD, FRCPC, David T.**

**U.S. scanning**



**C.T. scanning**

# Ultrasonography in the management of the airway

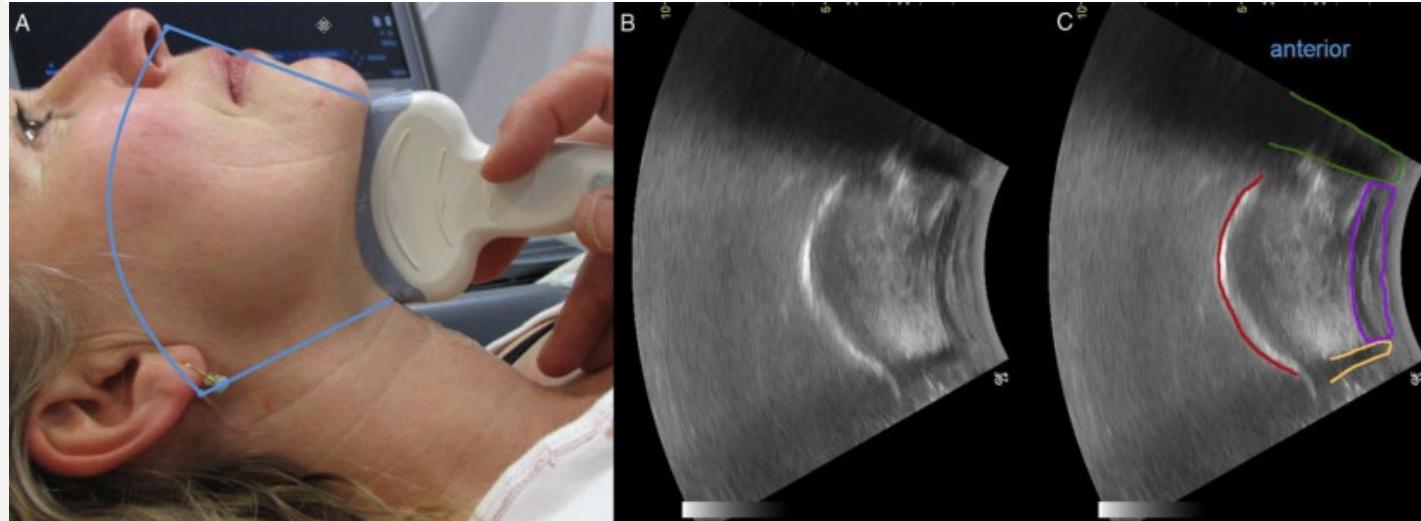
Acta Anaesthesiol Scand 2011; 55: 1155–1173

Printed in Singapore. All rights reserved

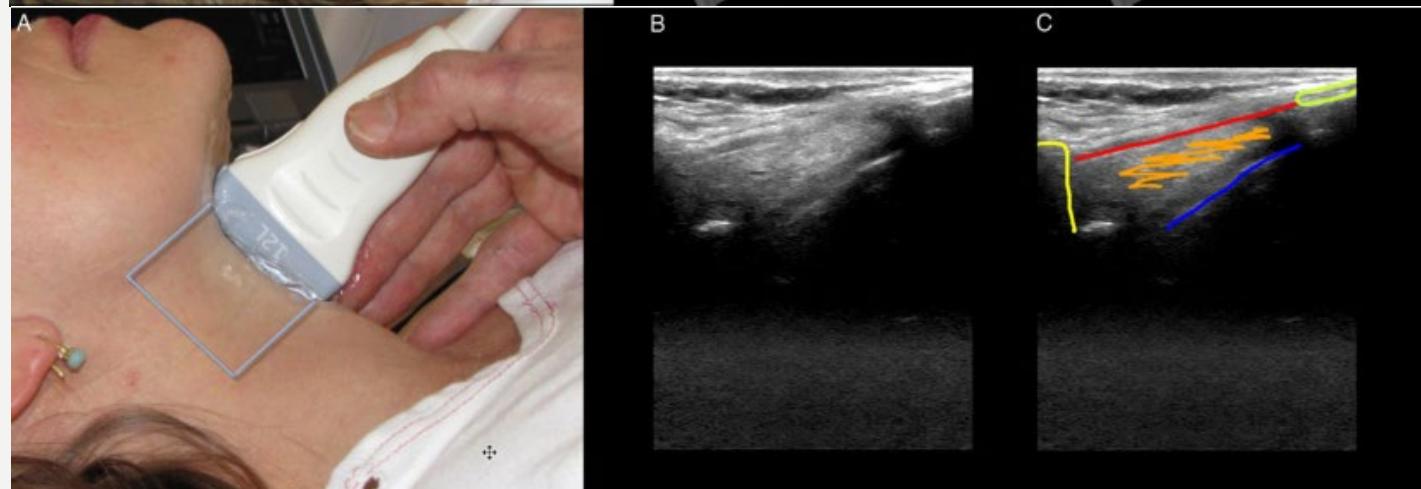
M. S. KRISTENSEN

Department of Anaesthesia and Operating Theatre Services 4231, Center of Head and Neck Surgery, Copenhagen University Hospital, Rigshospitalet, Denmark

**CONVEX probe  
(4-7 mHz)**



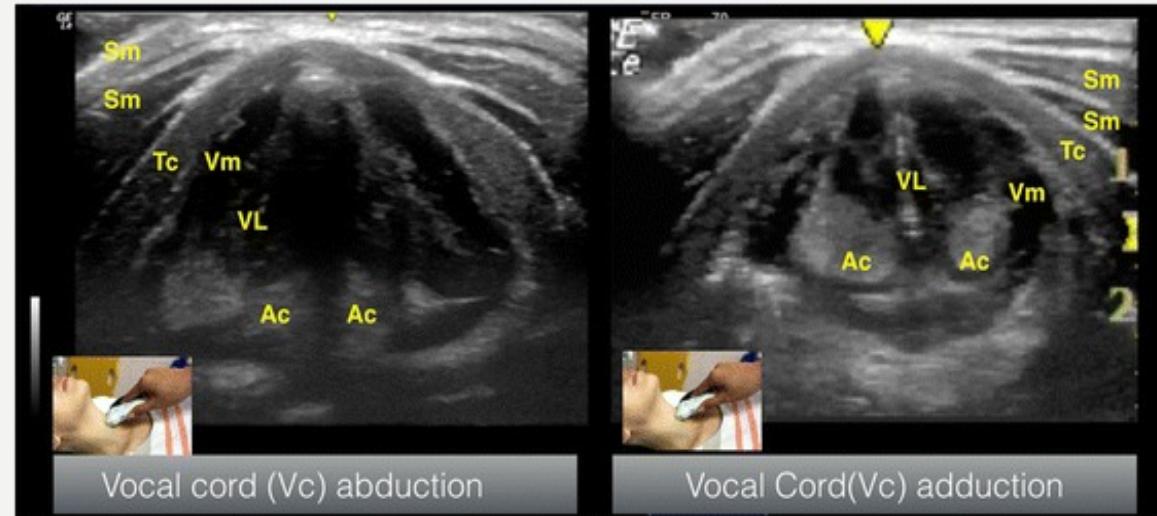
**High frequency  
LINEAR transducer  
(10-13 mHz)**



Acta  
Anaesthesiologica  
Scandinavica

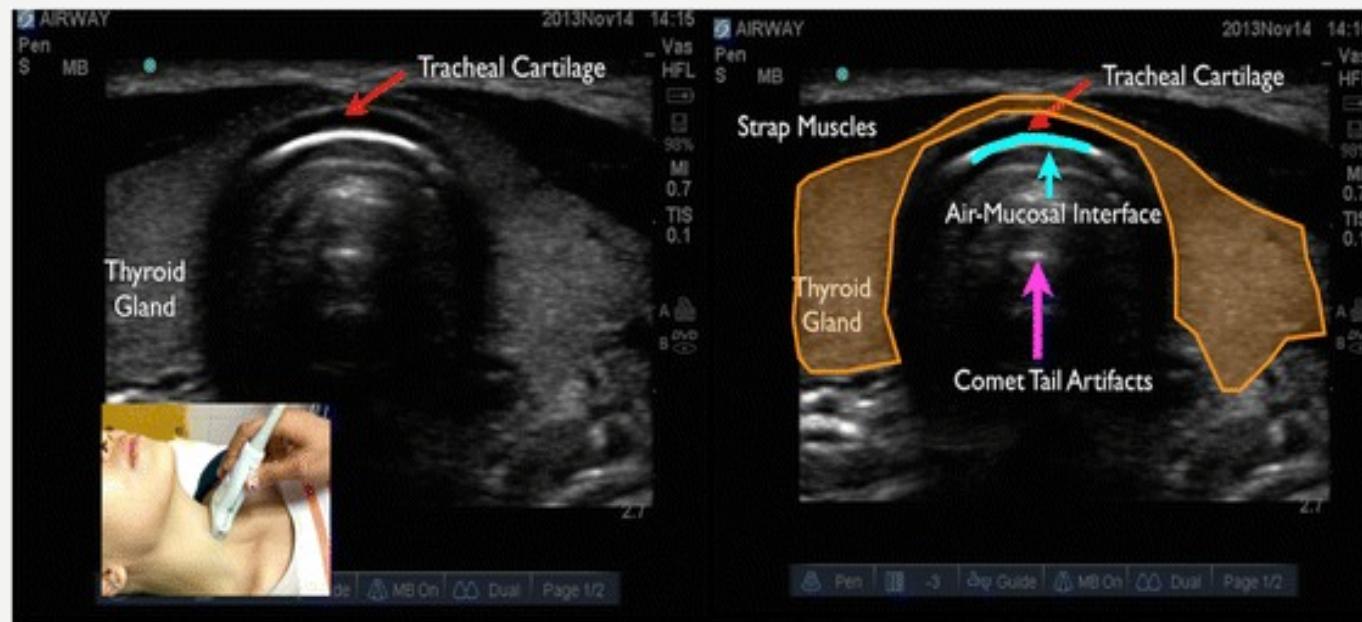
An International Journal of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care, Pain and Emergency Medicine

**SAI** Scandinavian Society of Anesthesiology and Intensive Care Medicine



## ANATOMICAL STRUCTURES

Osman and Sum *Journal of Intensive Care* (2016) 4:52  
DOI 10.1186/s40560-016-0174-z

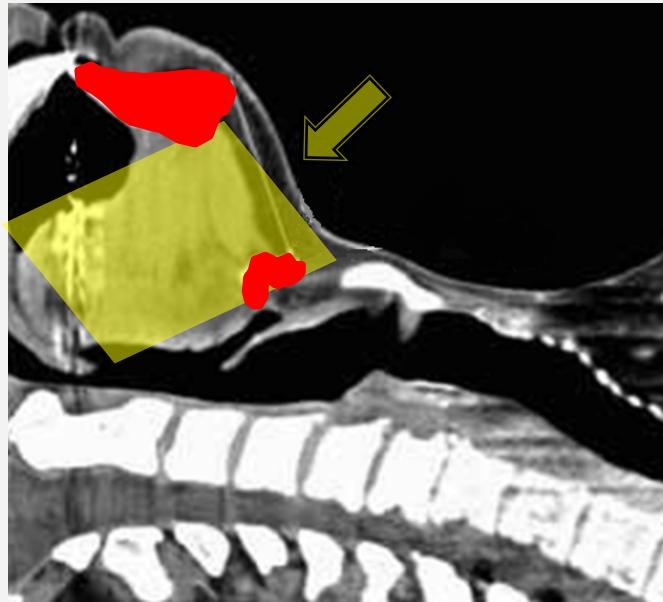


## ARTIFACTS

### Air-tissue Interface

# Oral Cavity

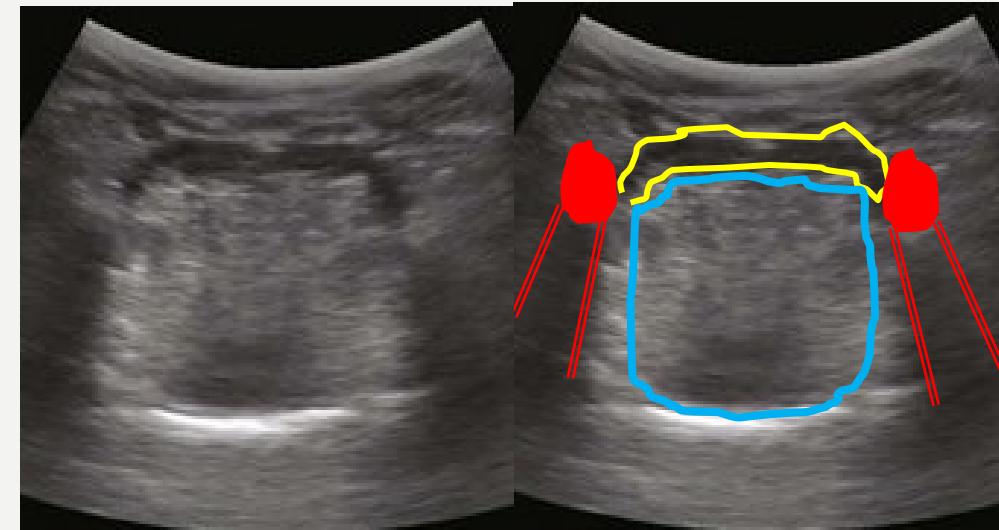
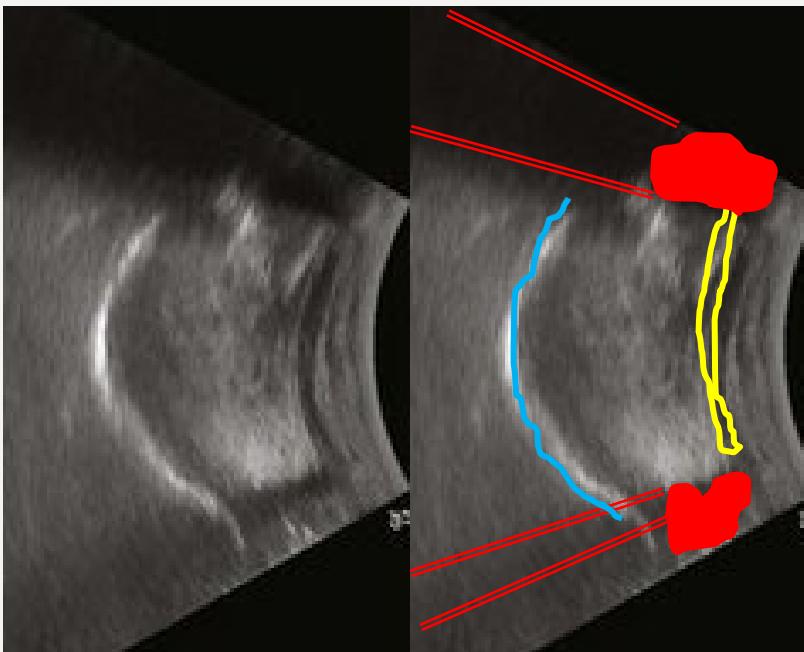
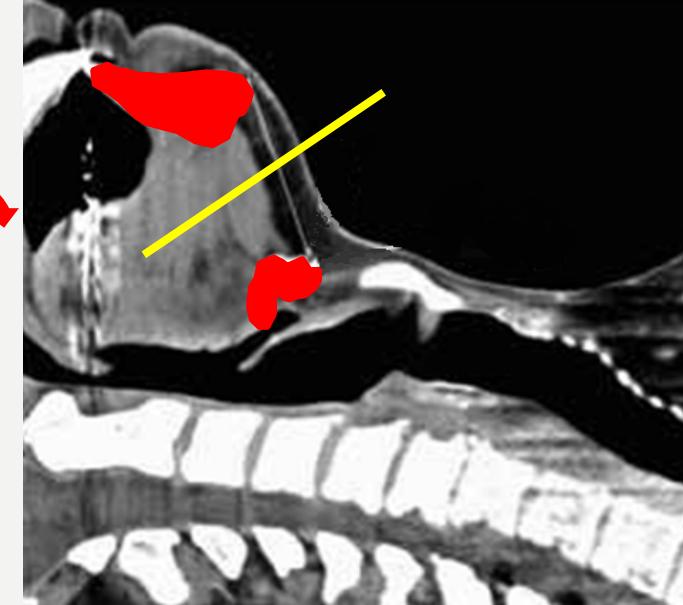
LONG.



90°

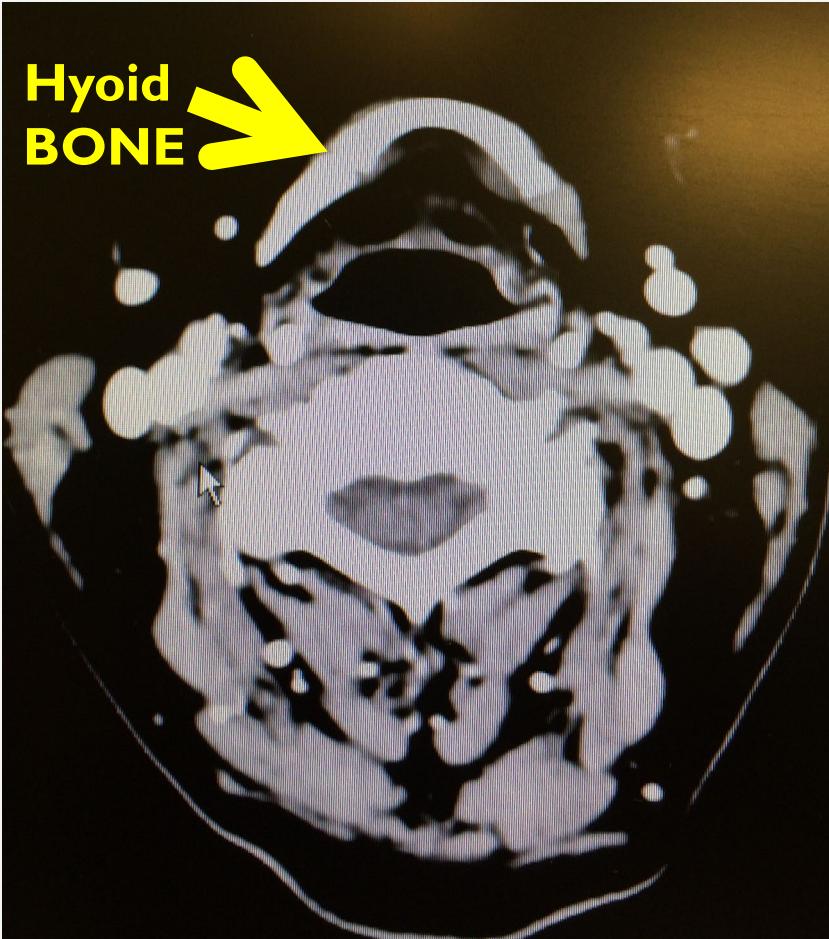
Convex  
probe (4-7  
mHz)

TRANSV.

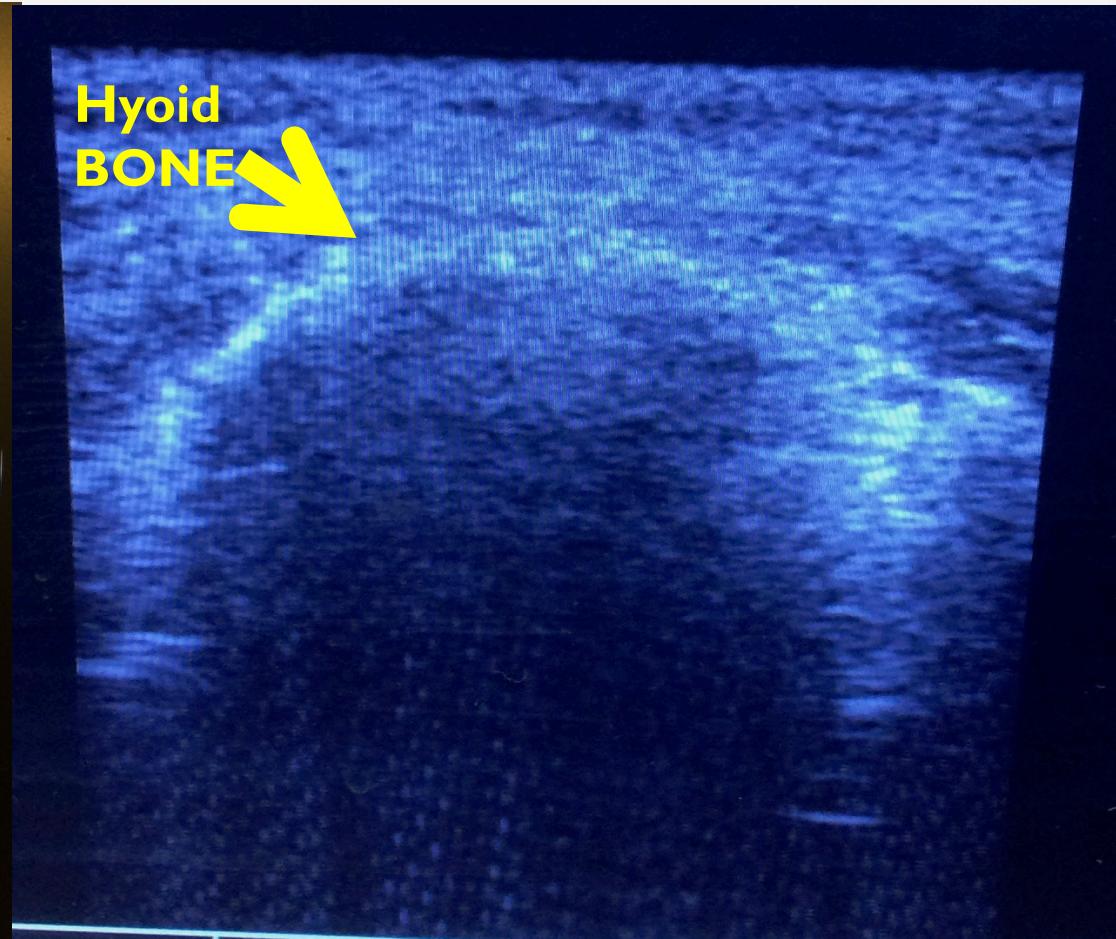


# Hyoid Bone transv.

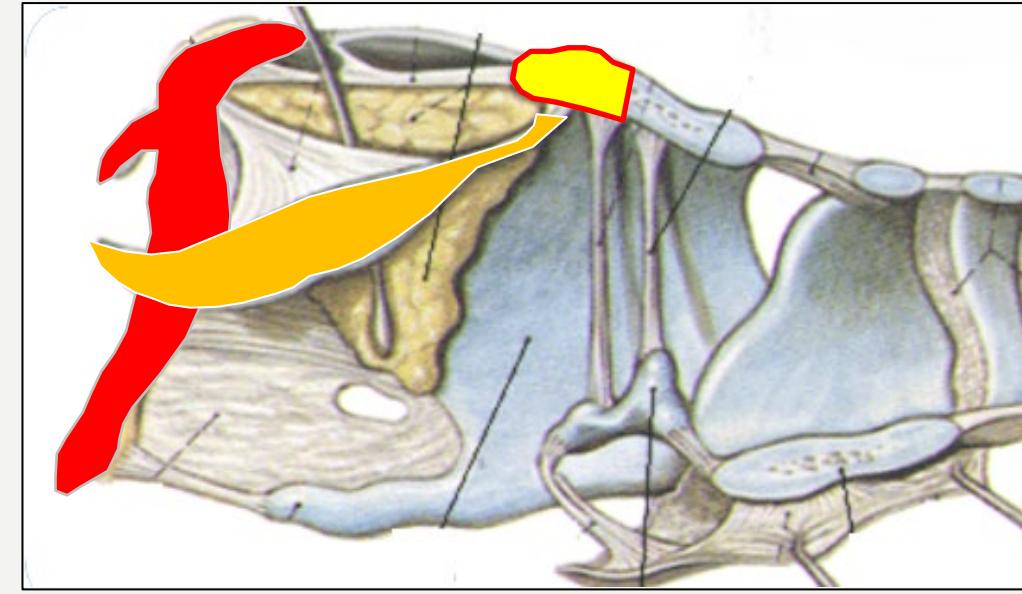
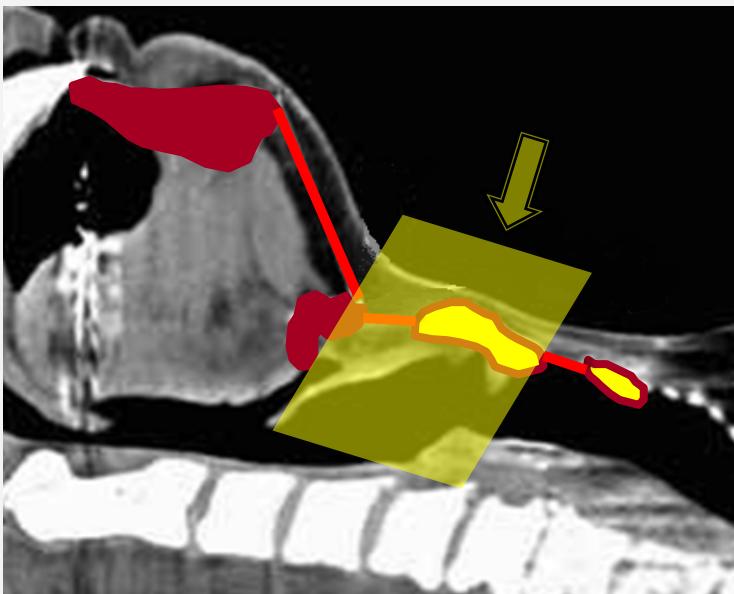
CT SCAN



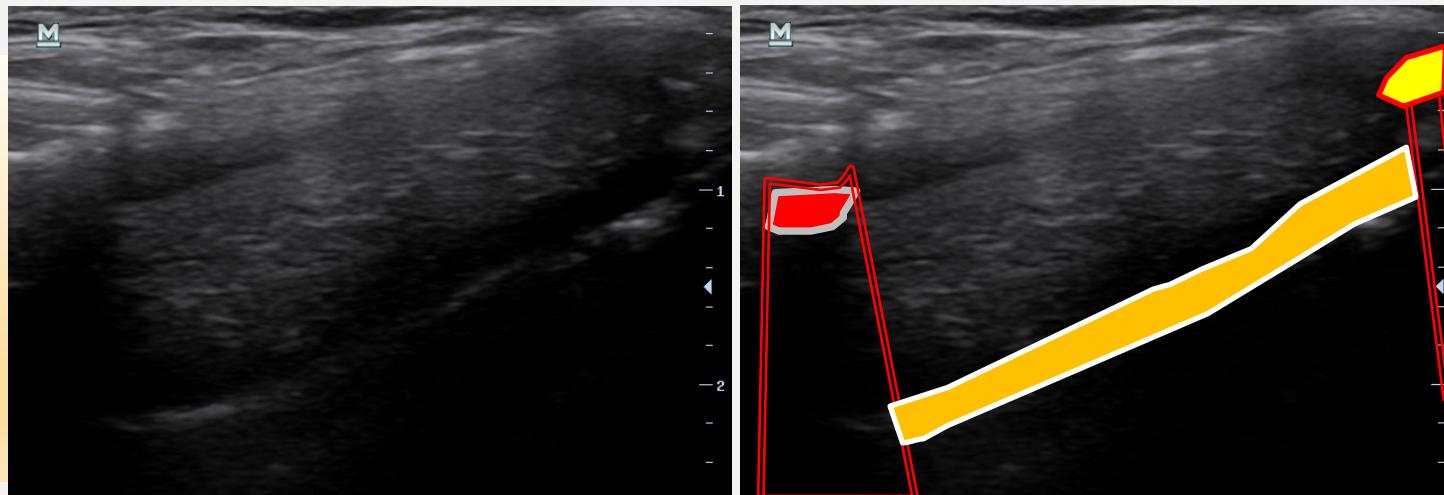
ULTRASOUND (US)



# Thyro-Hyoid Membrane long.



High frequency linear transducer (10-13 mHz)



EPIGLOTTIS

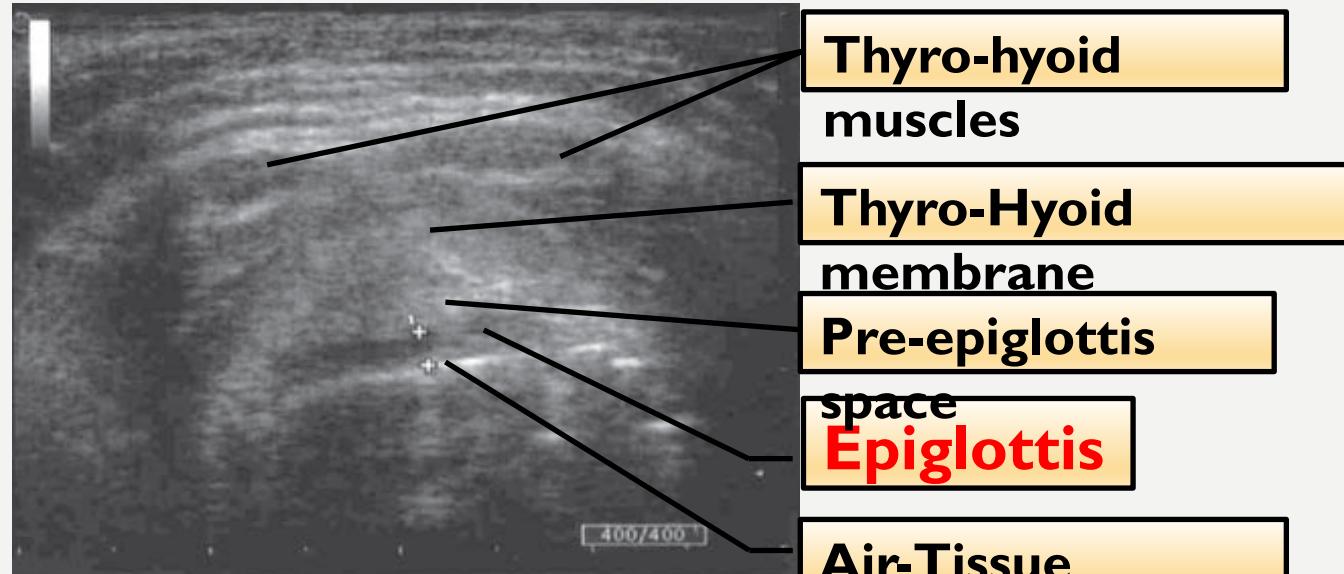
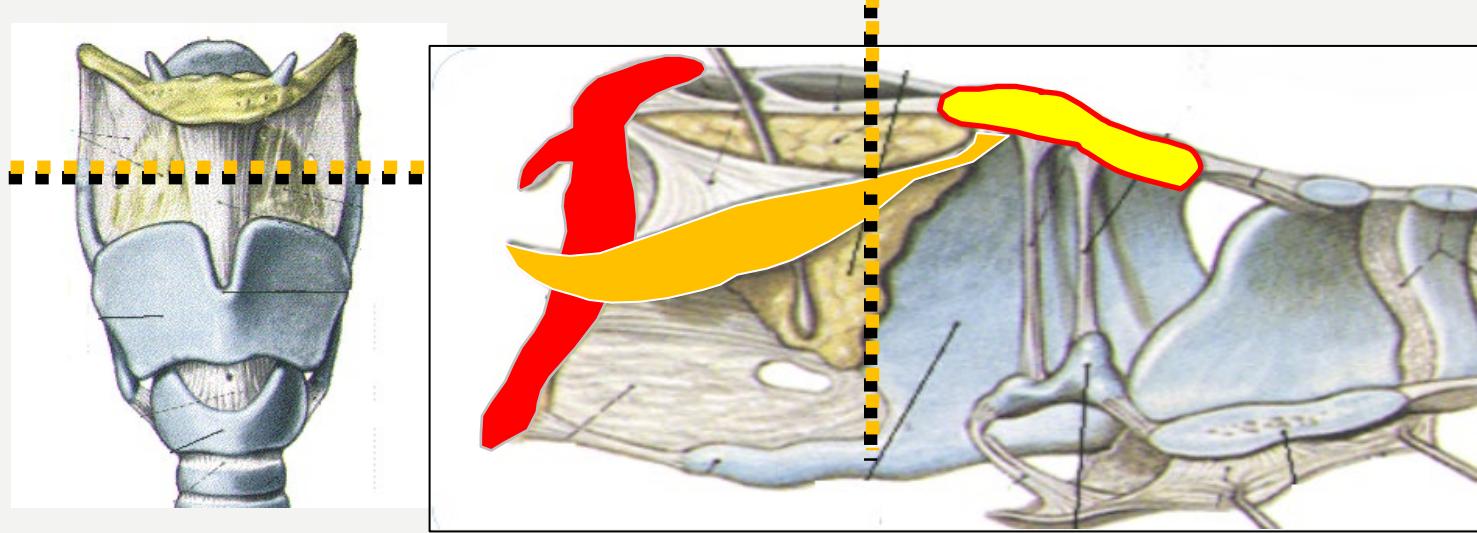
# Thyro-Hyoid Membrane

**transv.**

At the level of thyrohyoid membrane, the **epiglottis** is visible as a **hypoechoic** curvilinear structure with its posterior border demarcated by a bright hyperechoic linear **air-mucosal interface**.

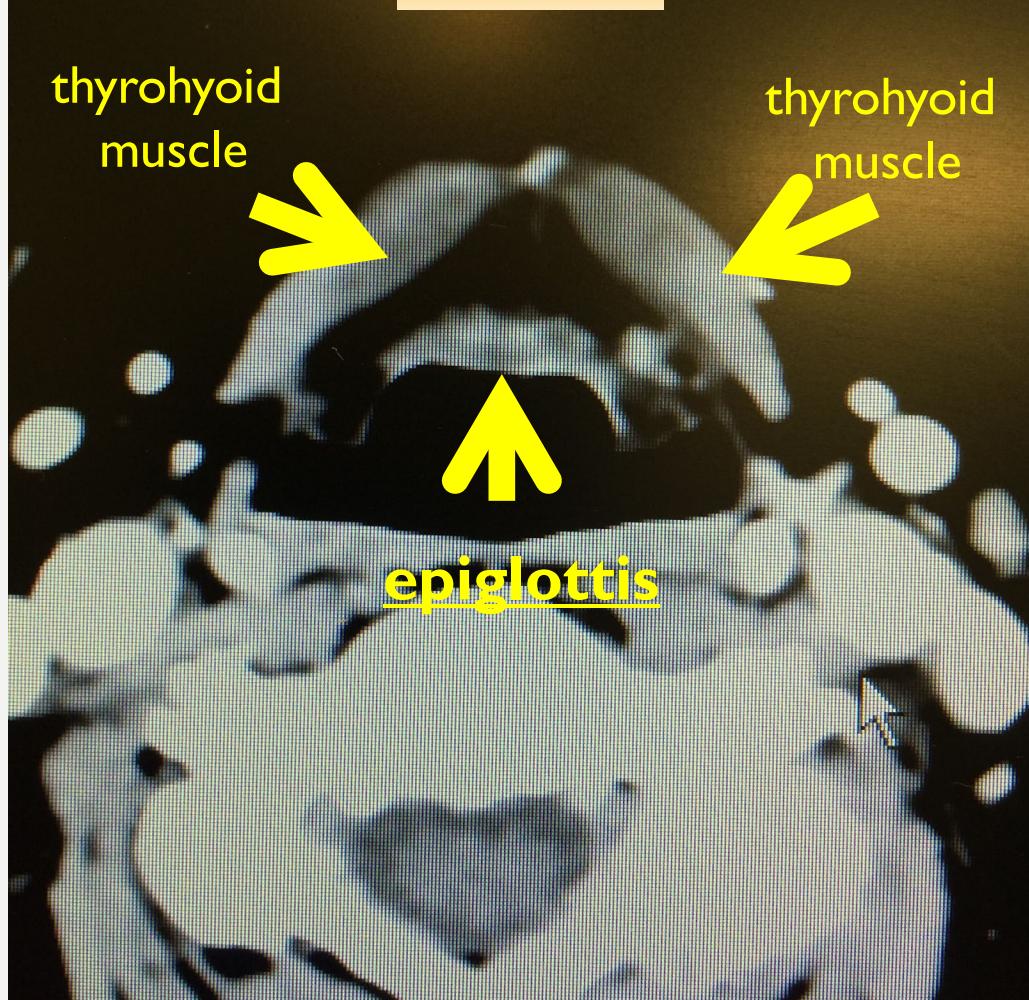
In this plane, the visualisation obtained, including the thyrohyoid muscles, provides an image we called the '**small face sign**'

«Small Face Sign»

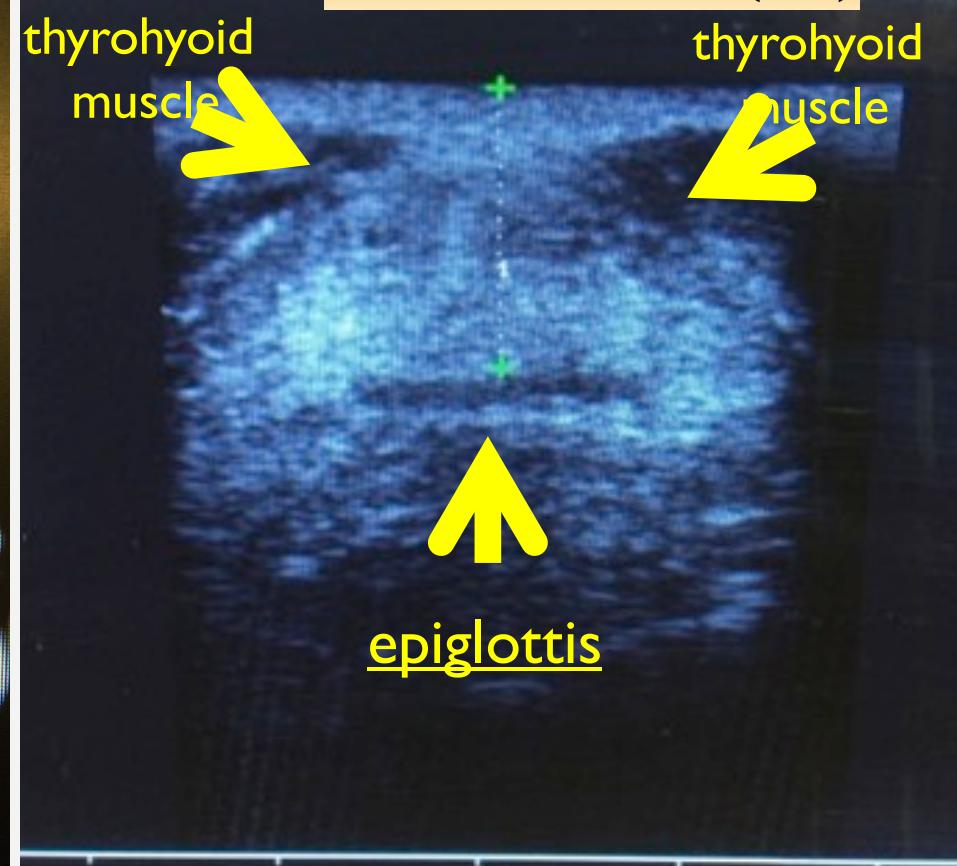


# Thyro-Hyoid Membrane transv.

CT SCAN



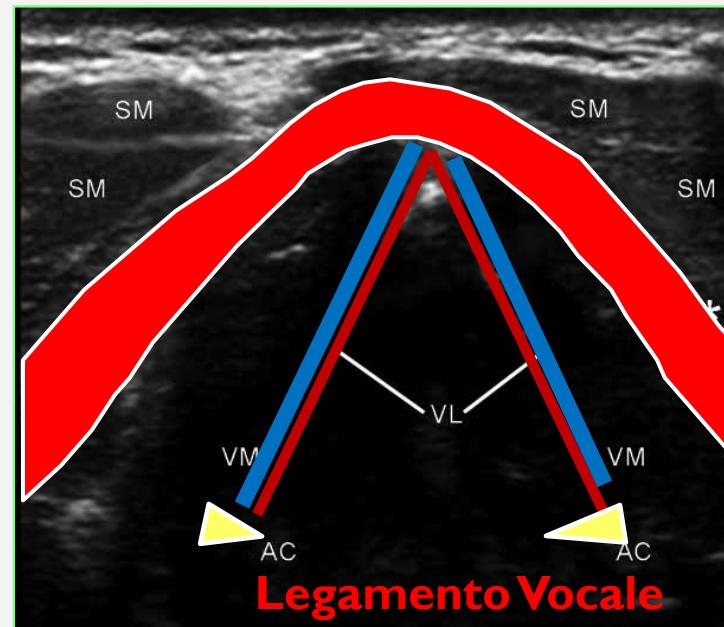
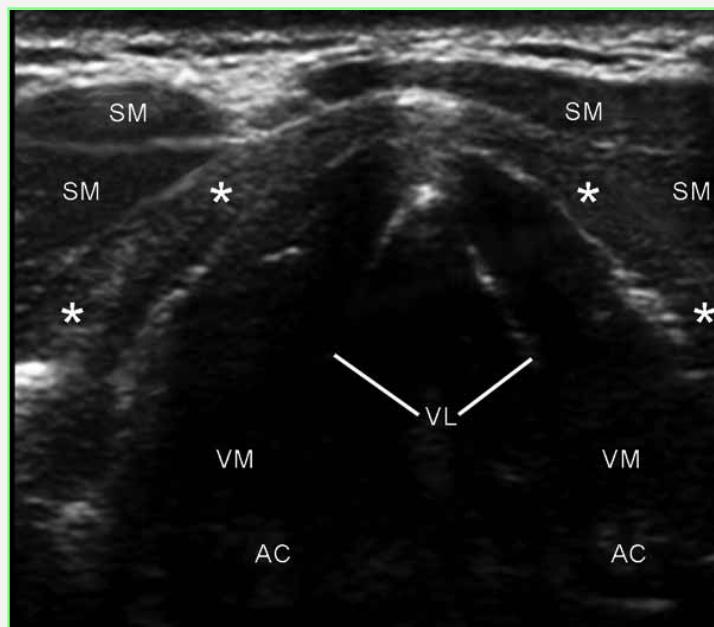
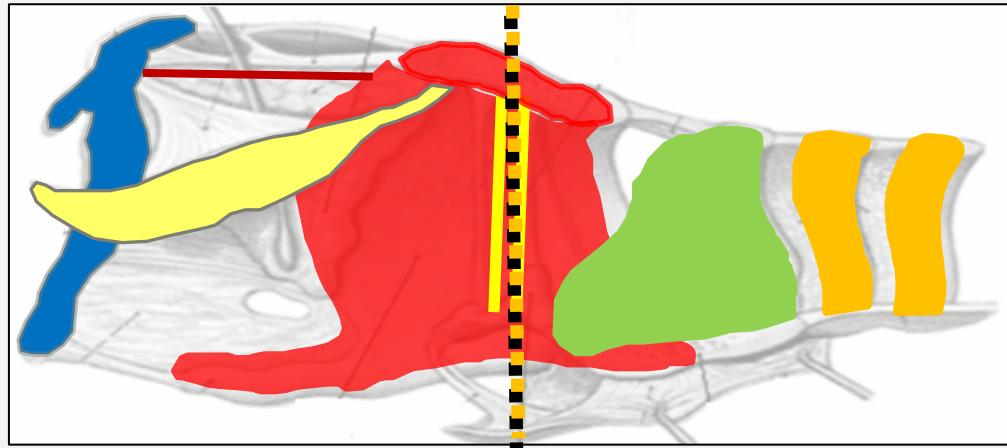
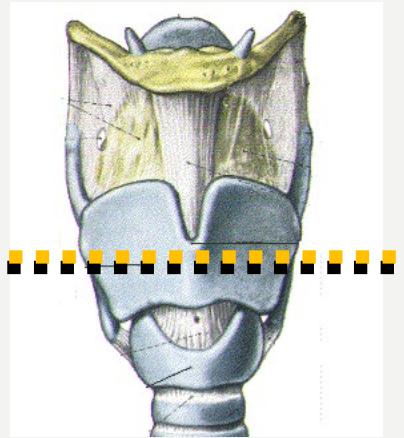
ULTRASOUND (US)



*“small face” sign*

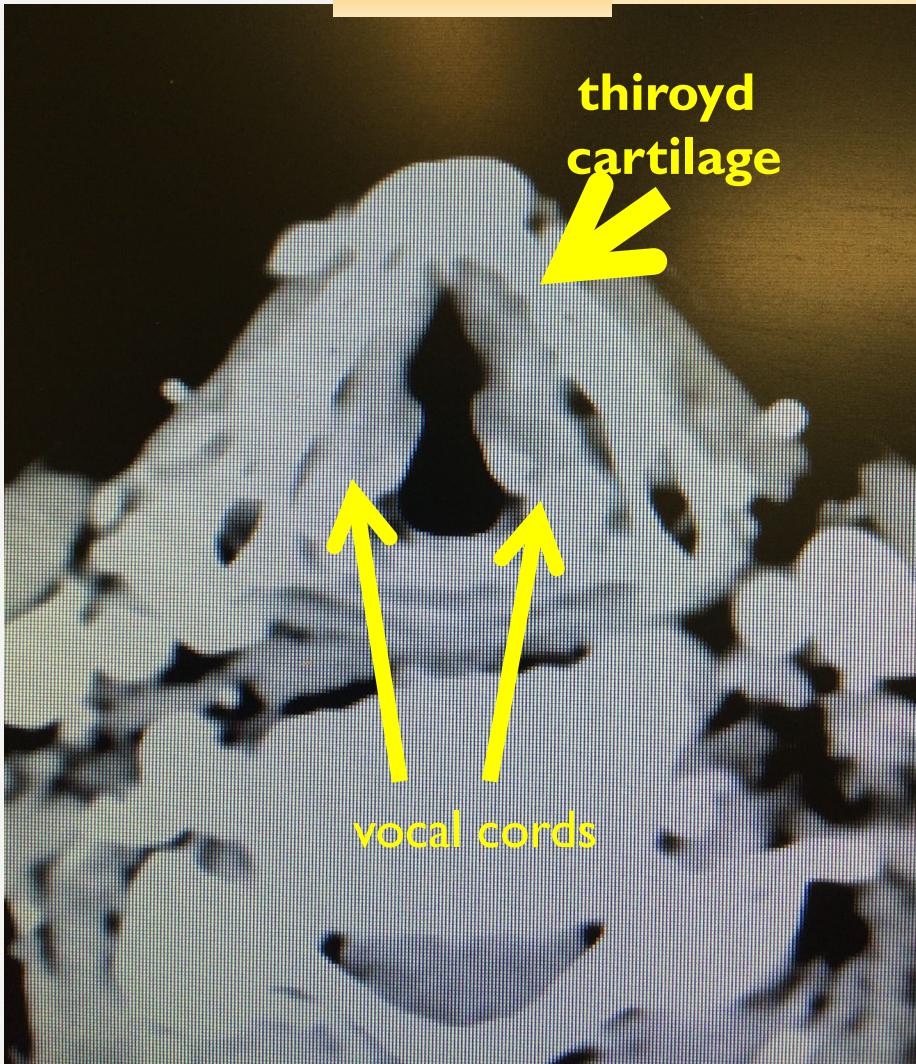
# Thyroid Cartilage transv.

The two **vocal cords** with arytenoids appear as **hyperechoic** lateral V-shaped structures. Protrusion of the tongue or swallowing help to identify the epiglottis, whereas identification of the vocal cords is facilitated by observing their movements during breathing or phonation

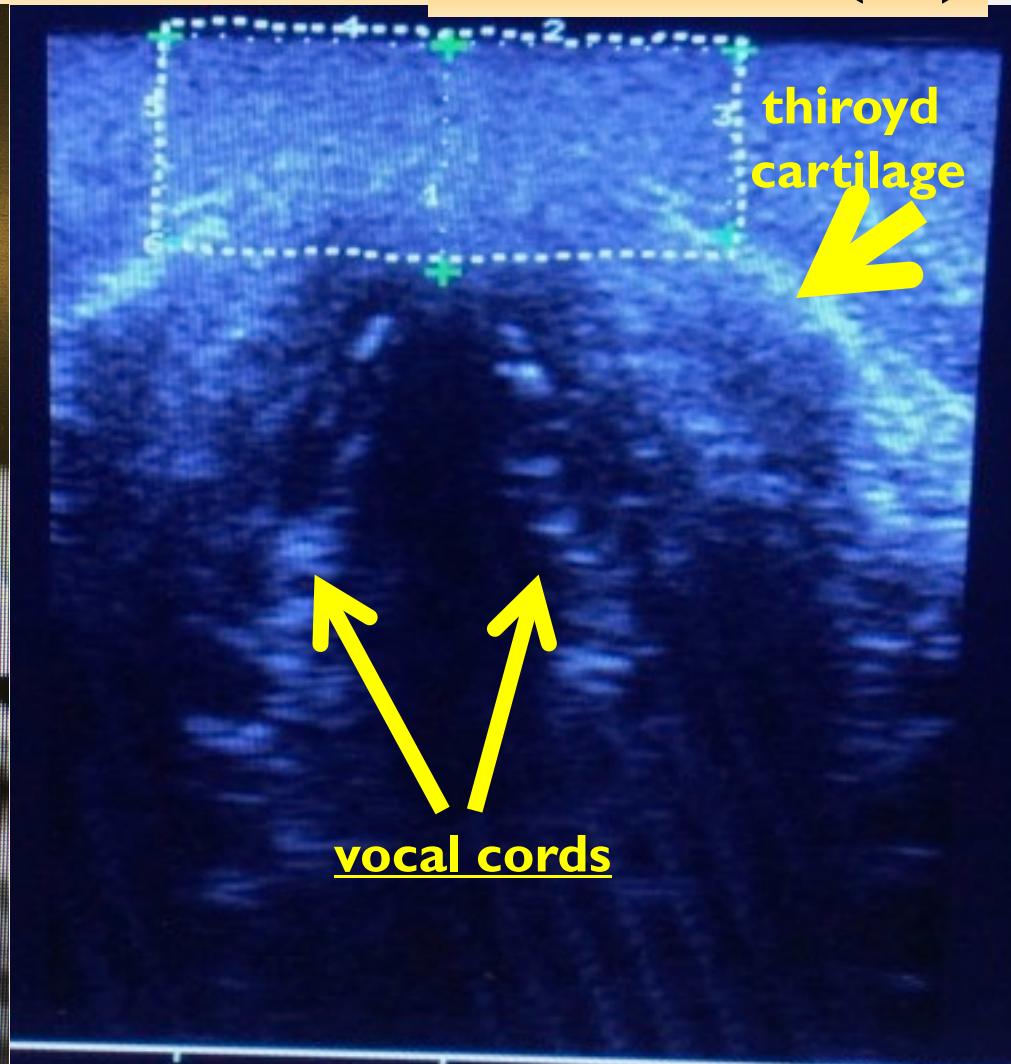


# Thyroid Cartilage transv.: VOCAL CORDS

CT SCAN



ULTRASOUND (US)



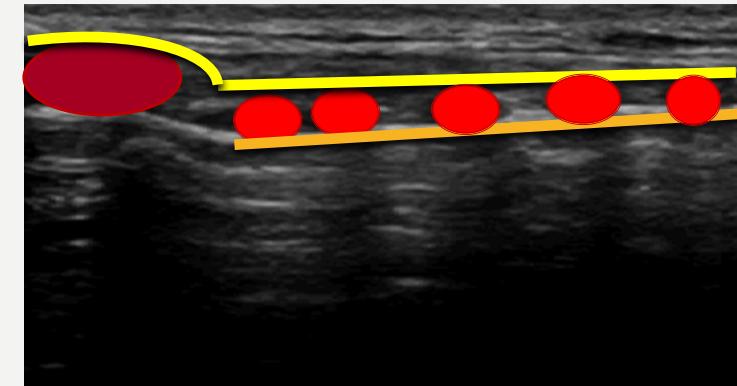
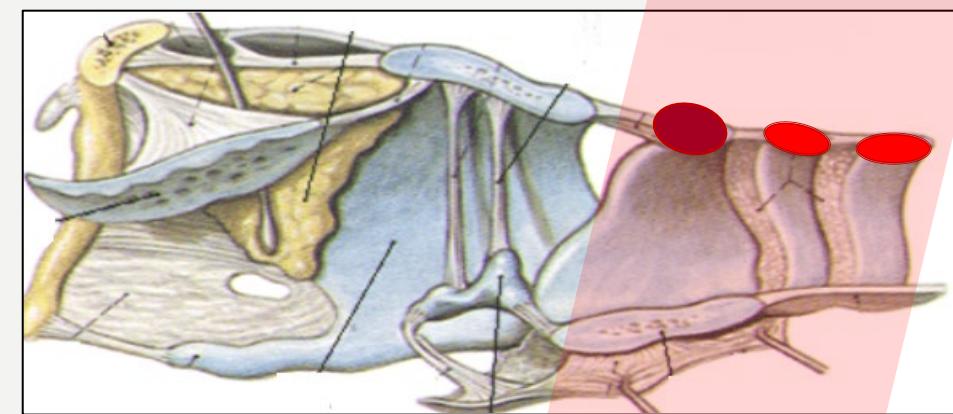
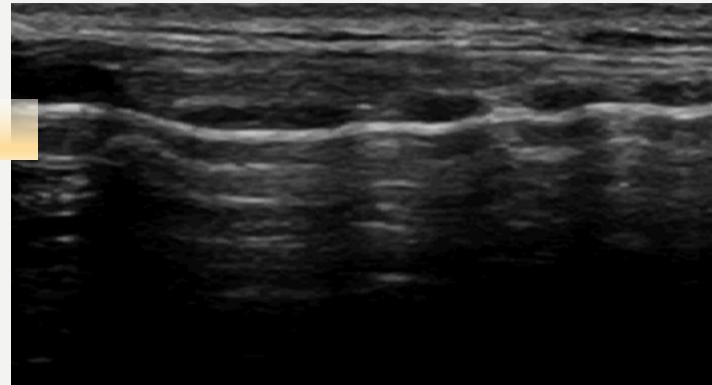
# Cricoid cartilage & Trachea

## long.

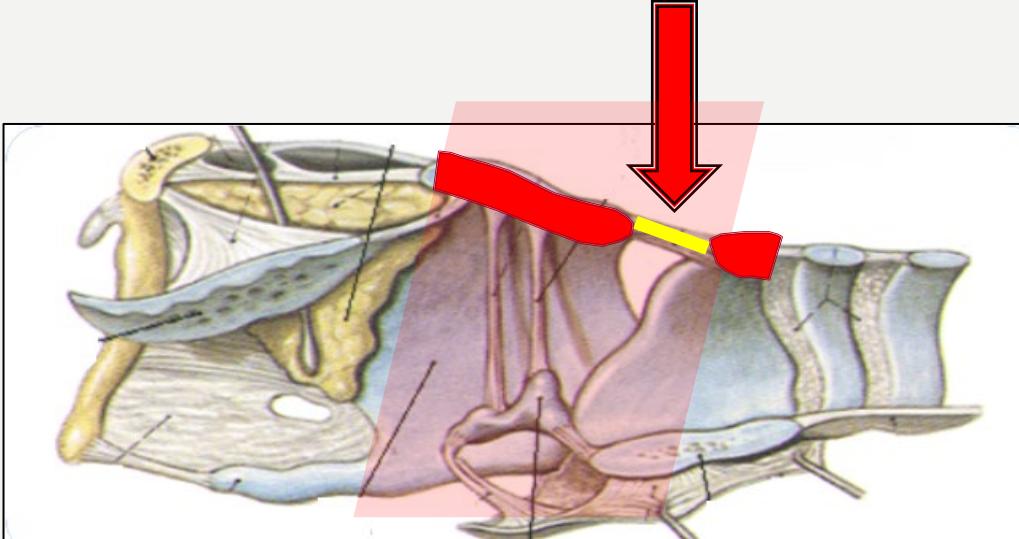
**“PEARLS  
STRING”**



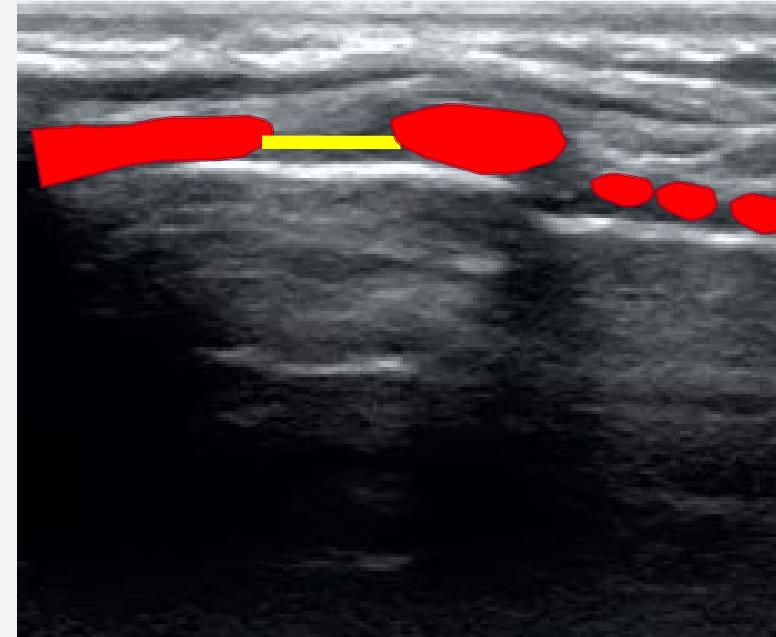
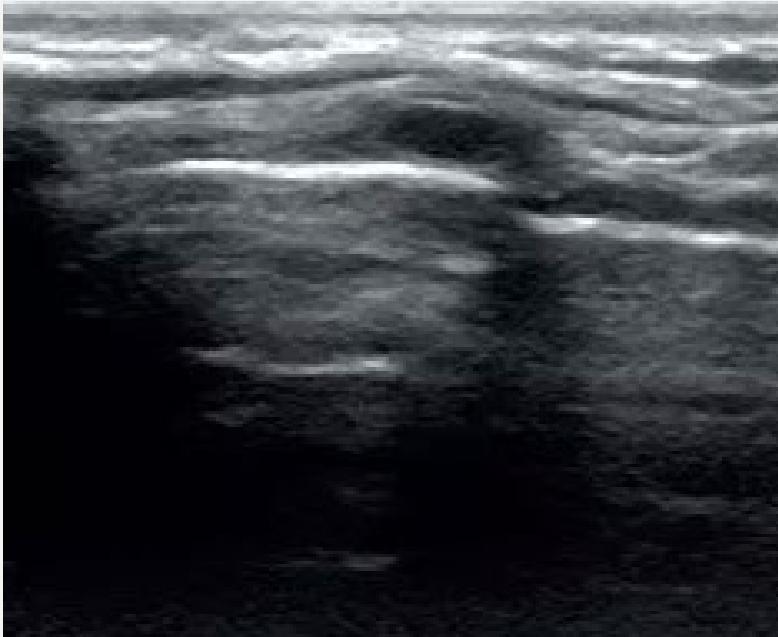
**“PEARLS  
STRING”**



# Crico-Thyroid membrane (CTM) long.

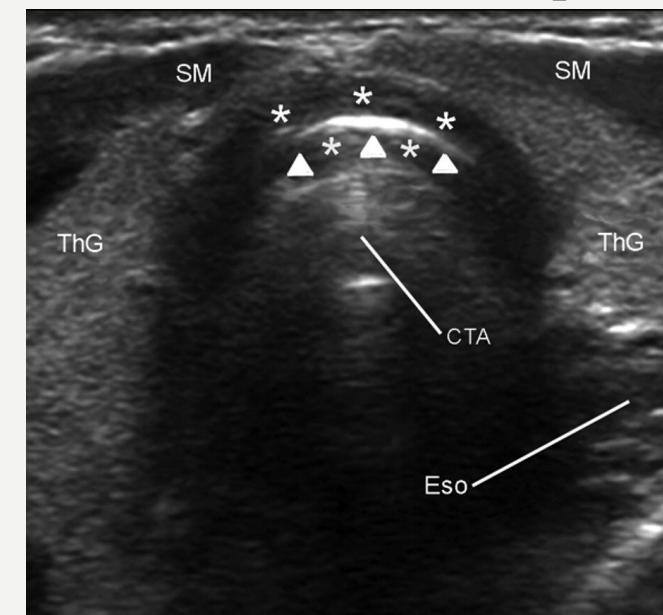
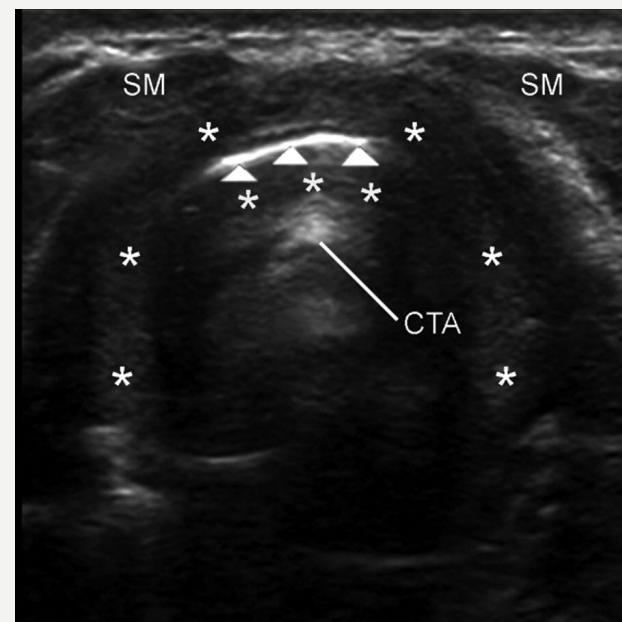
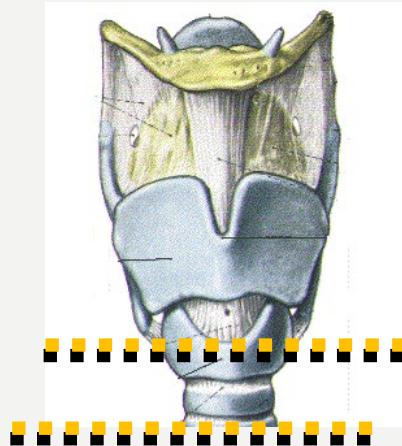


Solitamente si utilizza la scansione longitudinale, ma anche la scansione trasversale può essere utile....



# Cricoid cartilage & Trachea transv.

ETT Position?  
Mass?  
Stenosis/deviatio



# PREDICTION OF DIFFICULT AIRWAYS MANAGEMENT

**Ultrasounds measurements:**

...over Hyoid bone

**DCH** = Distance Chin to Hyoid Bone (Oral Cavity)

**Tongue** = Width & Volume

**TMJ** = Temporo Mandibular Joint Motility

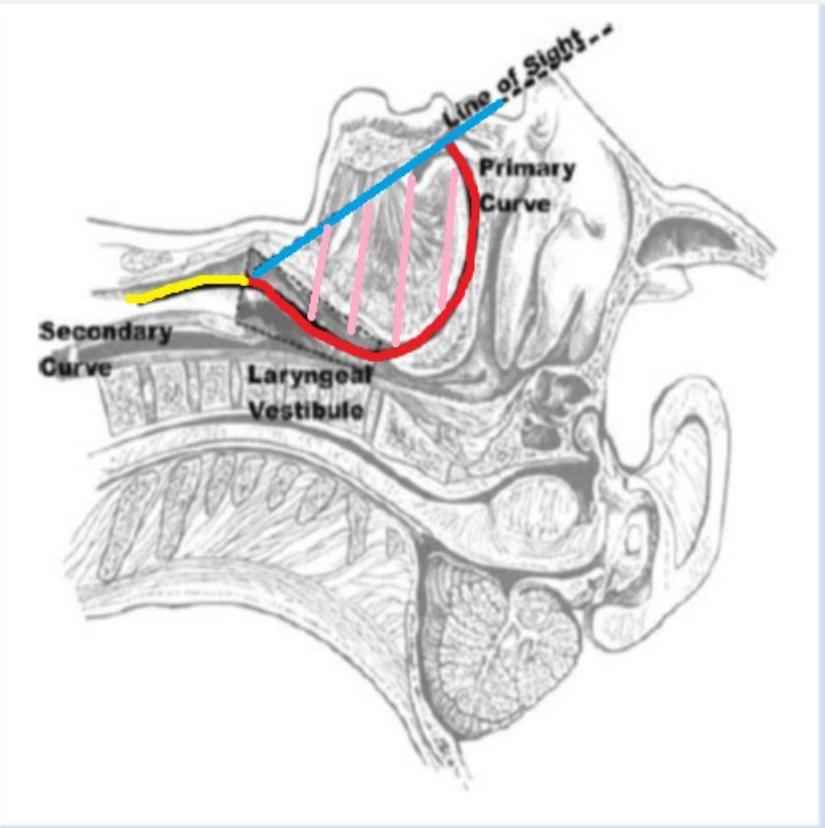
...under Hyoid bone

**DSH** = Distance Skin to Hyoid Bone

**DST** = Distance Skin to Thyroid cartilage (vocal cords)

**DSE** = Distance Skin to Epiglottis

## UNDER HYOID BONE



*Greenland K. The sniffing and extension-extension position: the need to develop the clinical relevance.*

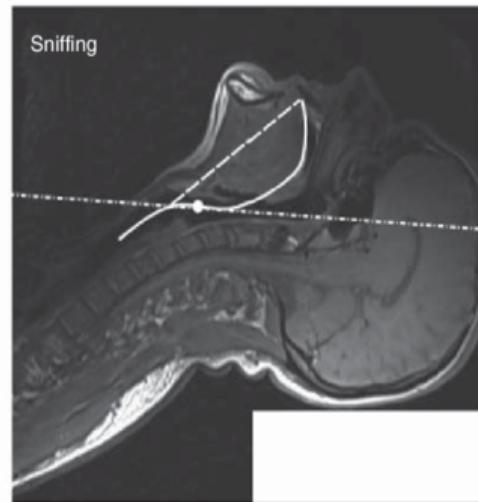
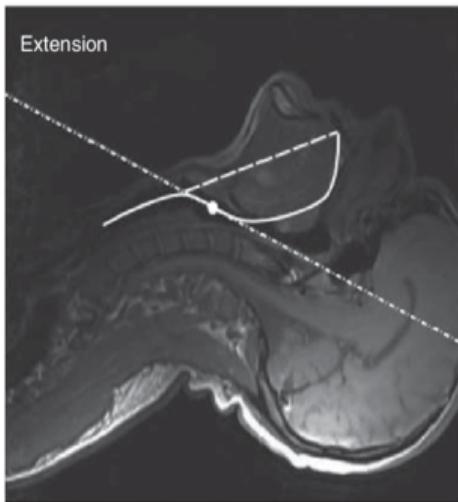
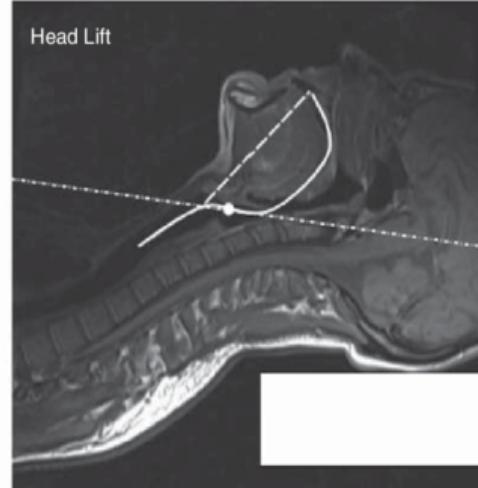
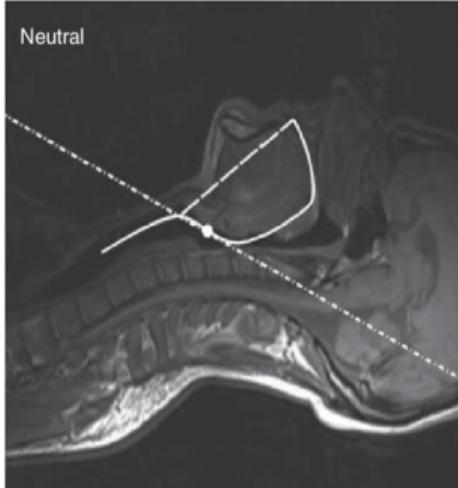
**the «Greenland model for direct laryngoscopy»**

**the 2 physio-pathologic hypothesis:**

- 1. High distance between the skin to the epiglottis is associated with a high probability of difficult laryngoscopy, especially when associated with a reduced distance between the skin and vocal cords.**
- 2. HIGH PRE-LARYNGEAL SOFT TISSUE THICKNESS AS IN OBESE**

# UNDER HYOID BONE

the «Greenland model for direct laryngoscopy»



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- 2. HIGH PRE-LARYNGEAL SOFT TISSUE THICKNESS AS IN OBESE**

## Original Article

# Correlation between preoperative ultrasonographic airway assessment and laryngoscopic view in adult patients: A prospective study

Aruna Parameswari, Mithila Govind, Mahesh Vakamudi

Department of Anaesthesiology, Critical Care and Pain Medicine, Sri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute, Sri Ramachandra University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

the three most  
studied parameters

## Abstract

**Background and Aims:** Difficult tracheal intubation is associated with serious morbidity and mortality and cannot be always predicted based on preoperative airway assessment using conventional clinical predictors. Ultrasonographic airway assessment could be a useful adjunct, but at present, there are no well-defined sonographic criteria that can predict the possibility of encountering a difficult airway. The present study was conducted with the aim of finding some correlation between preoperative sonographic airway assessment parameters and the Cormack-Lehane (CL) grade at laryngoscopic view in adult patients.

**Material and Methods:** This was a prospective, double-blinded study on 130 patients undergoing elective surgery under general anesthesia. Preoperative clinical and ultrasonographic assessment of the airway was done to predict difficult intubation and was correlated with the CL grade noted at laryngoscopy. The sensitivity, specificity, positive predictive value, and negative predictive values of the parameters were assessed.

**Results:** The incidence of difficult intubation was 9.2%. Among the clinical predictors, the modified Mallampati classification had the maximum sensitivity and specificity, and among the sonographic parameters, the skin to epiglottis distance had the maximum sensitivity and specificity to predict difficult laryngoscopy. A combination of these two tests improved the sensitivity in predicting a difficult laryngoscopy.

**Conclusions:** The skin to epiglottis distance, as measured at the level of the thyrohyoid membrane, is a good predictor of difficult laryngoscopy. When combined with the modified Mallampati classification, the sensitivity of the combined parameter was found to be greater than any single parameter taken alone.

**Keywords:** Airway, assessment, laryngoscopy, ultrasonography

## OVER HYOID BONE

=Anteroposterior



Figure 1: Blue dotted line: Width of the tongue

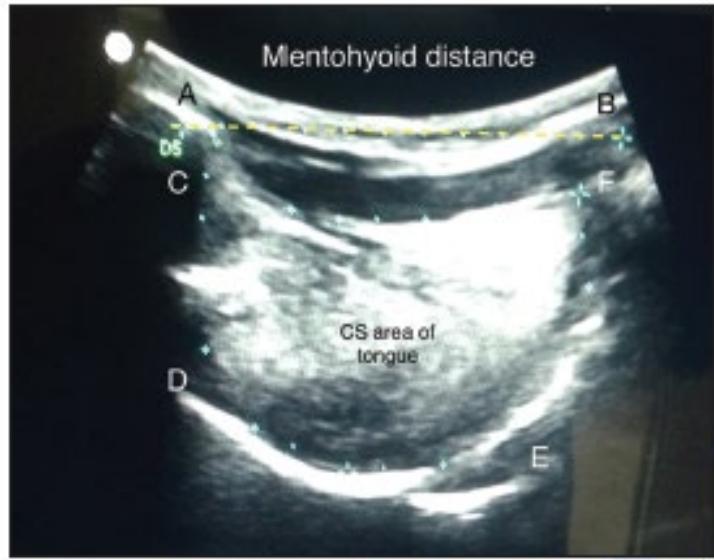


Figure 2: Blue dotted area CDEF: Cross-sectional area of the tongue; yellow dash line AB: Mentohyoid distance

## TONGUE WIDTH

## TONGUE VOLUME & MENTHO-HYOID DISTANCE

Table 3: Comparison of the various sonographically assessed parameters to predict difficult laryngoscopy

Parameter	Sensitivity (%)	Specificity	Positive predictive value (%)	Negative predictive value (%)
Skin to hyoid distance	58.3	56.8	12.1	93.1
Volume of tongue	66.7	62.7	15.4	94.6
Volume of floor of mouth	50	55.9	10.3	91.7
Skin to epiglottis	75	63.6	17.5	96.2

## UNDER HYOID BONE



Figure 3: Skin to epiglottis distance shown by blue dotted line

## SKIN TO EPIGLOTTIS

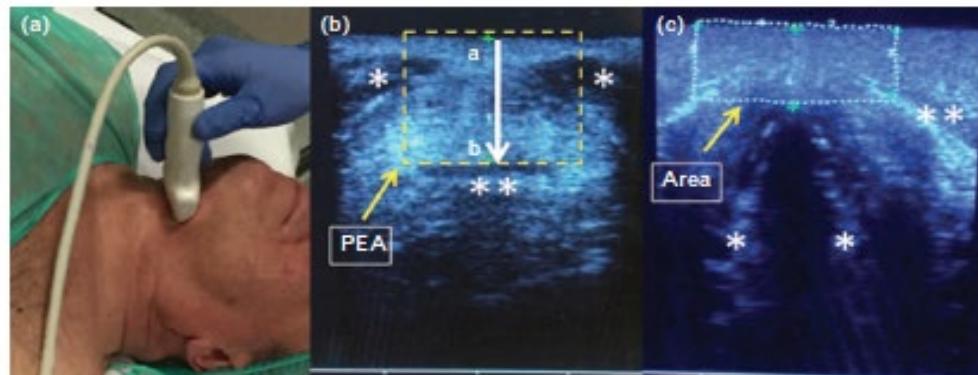
Table 2: Distribution of patients according to the Cormack-Lehane grade of laryngoscopic view

Cormack-Lehane grade	Number of patients (%)
I	81 (62.3)
II	37 (28.5)
III	12 (9.2)
IV	None

**ORIGINAL ARTICLE****Evaluation of two neck ultrasound measurements as predictors of difficult direct laryngoscopy***A prospective study*

Stefano Falcetta, Simona Cavallo, Vincenzo Gabbanelli, Paolo Pelaia, Massimiliano Sorbello, Ivana Zdravkovic and Abele Donati

Fig. 1



(a) Ultrasonography at the level of thyrohyoid membrane and vocal cords. (b) 'The small face sign' (pre-epiglottic space) at the level of thyrohyoid membrane. \*Thyrohyoid muscles; \*\*epiglottis; a-b, median distance skin to epiglottis; \*\*\*pre-epiglottic area. (c) \*Vocal cords; a-b, median distance skin-vocal cords; prevocal cords area.

PRE-laryngeal soft tissue's thickness

**301 patients enrolled**

**...C-L in six degrees  
...correlation &  
for gender**

# PREDICTORS OF DIFFICULT FONA

- Difficulty identifying the location of the cricothyroid membrane
  - Female sex
  - Age less than 8 years
  - **Thick/obese neck**
  - Displaced airway
  - Overlying pathology (eg, inflammation, induration, radiation, tumor)
- Difficult access to the trachea through the anterior neck
  - **Thick neck/overlying pathology**
  - Fixed cervical spine flexion deformity



Brief Report

Accuracy of ultrasound-guided marking of the cricothyroid membrane before simulated failed intubation 

Michael Mallin, MD <sup>a,\*</sup>, Keith Curtis, MD <sup>a</sup>, Matthew Dawson, MD <sup>b</sup>, Patrick Ockerse, MD <sup>a</sup>,  
Matthew Ahern, DO <sup>a</sup>

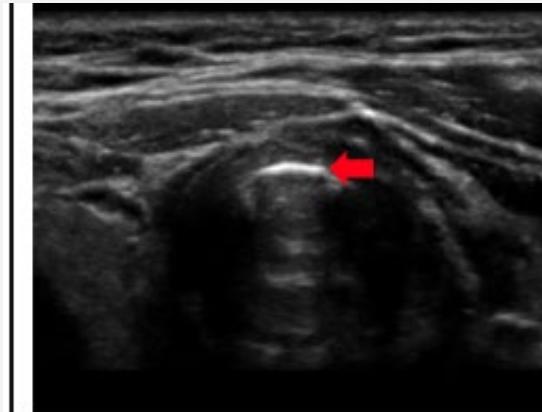
<sup>a</sup> University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

<sup>b</sup> University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY



# WHEN???

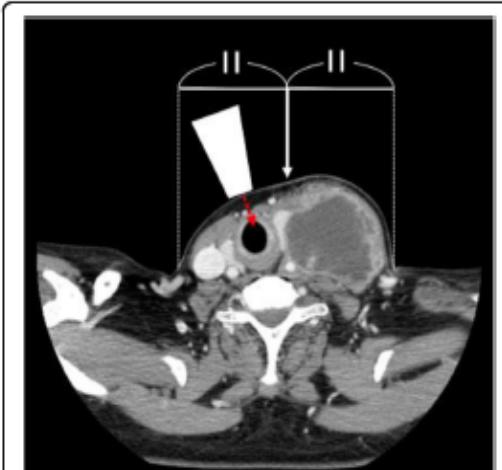
Not during CICO crisis,  
but **before** starting to  
manage the airways...



**Fig. 2** Ultrasound-guided identification of the cricothyroid membrane  
This is a cross-sectional view of the cervical ultrasound image. The red arrow shows the cricothyroid membrane. The cricothyroid membrane could not be identified by palpation, but was identified on ultrasound



**Fig. 1** The patient's neck The asterisk indicates the area palpated by the surgeon to find the cricothyroid membrane. The red circle shows the cricothyroid membrane identified by ultrasound



**Fig. 3** Cervical computed tomography The white arrow indicates the apparent center of the neck. The true center (sagittal line) of the neck is present toward the right side. The ultrasound probe (white trapezoid) is placed perpendicularly to the skin and the ultrasound beam (red dashed arrow) directed to the cricothyroid membrane. The trachea is deviated to the right and rotated to the right

CASE REPORT

Open Access



## Ultrasound-guided identification of the cricothyroid membrane in a patient with a difficult airway: a case report

Hiromu Okano<sup>1</sup>, Kohji Uzawa<sup>1\*</sup>, Kunitaro Watanabe<sup>1</sup>, Akira Motoyasu<sup>1</sup>, Joho Tokumine<sup>1</sup>, Alan Kawarai Lefor<sup>2</sup> and Tomoko Yorozu<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract**

**Background:** Surgical cricothyroidotomy is considered to be the last resort for management of the difficult airway. A major point for a successful surgical cricothyroidotomy is to identify the location of the cricothyroid membrane.

**Case presentation:** We encountered a patient with progressive respiratory distress who was anticipated to have a difficult airway due to a large neck abscess. We prepared for both awake intubation and surgical cricothyroidotomy. The cricothyroid membrane could not be identified by palpation, but was readily identified using ultrasound.

**Conclusion:** Ultrasound-guided identification of the cricothyroid membrane may be useful in a patient with a difficult airway due to neck swelling.

**Keywords:** Cricothyroid membrane, Cricothyroidotomy, Ultrasound, Difficult airway



**Fig. 1** The patient's neck The asterisk indicates the area palpated by the surgeon to find the cricothyroid membrane. The red circle shows the cricothyroid membrane identified by ultrasound

sprayed the vocal cords under endoscopic control. Fiberoptic intubation was successfully performed trans-orally without complications. The neck abscess was drained operatively. The patient was treated as an inpatient with antibiotics, and discharged on postoperative day 23, without complications.

# GRAZIE!

