INTRODUCTION

Tracheotomy is a commonly performed surgical procedure for access to the airway. The overwhelming majority of tracheotomies are performed as elective procedures. In general, there are four categories of indications for tracheotomy: long-term mechanical ventilation, upper airway obstruction, need for pulmonary toilet, and as an adjunct to surgery where mechanical ventilation or obstruction are anticipated.

RESULTS

The tracheotomy punch is easily manipulated with one-hand and passed through a horizontal tracheal incision. (B) Punch creates a 1.2 cm window.

DISCUSSION

In urgent situations, surgical means of securing an airway are the last resort after failed intubation techniques, laryngeal mask ventilation, and jet ventilation. When feasible, emergency cricothyroidotomy is the preferred method of obtaining an emergency surgical airway due to simplicity and speed. Urgent awake tracheotomy may be indicated in preference to cricothyroidotomy after failure to ventilate by either mask or intubation during an elective tracheotomy.

As illustrated by the cases described, the ease of function is beneficial for the performance of an urgent tracheotomy. The cutting function of the tracheotomy punch is sturdy, thus allowing effective resection of calcified tracheal rings.

REFERENCES