

Muscle Relaxants In Surgery Hiked Hypoxia Risks

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Giving neuromuscular blocking agents as part of the anesthetic package raised the risk of respiratory complications, a large single-center study showed.

Use of intermediate-acting, non-depolarizing neuromuscular blocking agents increased the risk of both oxygen desaturation and reintubation ($P<0.01$ for both), Matthias Eikermann, MD, of Massachusetts General Hospital, and colleagues reported online in *BMJ*.

These drugs "are a risk factor for hypoxic events after extubation and increased reintubation rates," the researchers wrote. "This is important because [these] agents now represent 80 percent of the market volume for neuromuscular blocking agents."

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