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REPRODUCED FROM THE COLLECTIONS
OF THE ARCHIVES OF THE
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

FROM:
DR. EDWARD A. PATRICK, M.D., PH.D.
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THE FOLLOWING NEWS RELEASE WAS ISSUED TO MAJOR NEWS ORGANIZATIONS
THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES ON 1 AUGUST 1979:

FUR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHOKING DEATHS MAY HAVE BEEN CAUSED

BY NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES TECHNIQUES

THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT A GROUP OF CONSULTANTS AT THE NATIONAL ACADEMY
OF SCIENCES IS INVOLVED IN A COVER-UP WHICH MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO
CHOKING DEATHS.

CHOKING DEATHS MAY HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY USE OF TECHNIQUES RECOMMENDED
BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES (N.A.S.). THE ACADEMY RECOMMENDS
BACKSLAPS AS THE FIRST TREATMENT OF CHOKING, CONTRARY TO KNOWN
MEDICAL EVIDENCE.

THE ACADEMY APPEARS TO BE ATTEMPTING TO COVER-UP AN ERROR MADE BY A
SMALL GROUP OF ACADEMY CONSULTANTS WHEN THEY RECOMMENDED BACKSLAPS
TO GREAT CHOKING VICTIMS AT ACADEMY CONFERENCES IN 1966 AND 1973.

AT THE ACADEMY'S EMERGENCY AIRWAY MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE IN 1976, DR.
EDWARD A. PATRICK (M.D., PH.D.) PRESENTED SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE
DEMONSTRATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER IN
EXPPELLING OBJECTS CAUGHT IN THE THROAT. (THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER
CONSISTS OF APPLYING MANUAL PRESSURE JUST BELOW THE RIBCAGE BUT
ABOVE THE NAVEL AND FORCEFULLY PUSHING INWARD AND UPWARD). DR.
PATRICK ALSO SHOWED BACKSLAPS TO BE INEFFECTIVE IN SAVING CHOKING
VICTIMS. HE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE BACKSLAP PRODUCES INSUFFICIENT
KINETIC ENERGY (AIR FLOW) TO EXPEL THE OBSTRUCTING OBJECT, WHEREAS
THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER PRODUCES THE NECESSARY ENERGY (AIR FLOW) TO

EPEL THE OBJECT FROM THE THROAT, DR. PATRICK PROVED THAT BACKSLAPS CAN RESULT IN DEATH BY CAUSING THE OBJECT TO GO DEEPER INTO THE THROAT. THIS EVIDENCE IS DOCUMENTED IN DECISION ANALYSIS IN MEDICINE, CRC PRESS, BOCA-RATON, FLA., 1979, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS NO. 77-19085.

THE CONSENSUS OF THE OFFICIAL GROUP OF EIGHT DOCTORS AT THAT 1976 ACADEMY MEETING, INCLUDING DR. PATRICK, WAS THAT THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER SHOULD BE THE FIRST METHOD USED TO SAVE A CHOKING VICTIM,

RATHER THAN FOLLOW THIS CONSENSUS, THE ACADEMY CONTINUED TO RECOMMEND BACKSLAPS AS THE FIRST TREATMENT FOR FOOD CHOKING, BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME SPECIFIED THAT BACKSLAPS BE FOLLOWED BY THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER IF THEY ARE INEFFECTIVE. THUS, THE EFFECTIVE HEIMLICH MANEUVER IS BEING USED TO COVER-UP THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE BACKSLAP. THIS PERMITS THE ACADEMY TO GIVE CREDIT TO THE BACKSLAP FOR A LIFE ACTUALLY SAVED BY THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER.

ALREADY THERE ARE 182 DOCUMENTED CASES WHERE THE BACKSLAP FAILED AFTER WHICH THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER SAVED THE CHOKING VICTIM. SINCE THE CHOKING VICTIM HAS LESS THAN FOUR MINUTES TO LIVE, TIME SPENT SLAPPING HIS BACK CAN COST HIM HIS LIFE. FURTHERMORE, BACKSLAPS CAN CAUSE THE OBJECT TO LODGE DEEPER IN THE THROAT. IN ONE CASE, 15-YEAR-OLD TIMMY ABNER CHOKED TO DEATH WHILE HIS BROTHER, AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN TRAINED IN METHODS RECOMMENDED BY THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, SLAPPED HIM ON THE BACK.

IN ANOTHER CASE, 15-YEAR-OLD GARY DANIELS SUFFERED PERMANENT BRAIN DAMAGE AFTER BEING SLAPPED ON THE BACK WHEN HE CHOKED ON A SANDWICH. HE HAS NOW BEEN IN A COMA FOR FOUR YEARS. THE RESCUER, A TEACHER, HAD FOLLOWED RED CROSS (NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES) INSTRUCTIONS. A FIVE-DAY COURT TRIAL WITH EXPERT MEDICAL TESTIMONY RESULTED IN A SETTLEMENT OF \$352,000 TO GARY.

IN ADDITION TO RECOMMENDING BACKSLAPS AS THE FIRST TREATMENT FOR CHOKING, ACADEMY CONSULTANTS REDESIGNED THE LYING-DOWN POSITION OF THE HEIMLICH MANEUVER (BY HAVING THE RESCUER KNEEL ALONGSIDE - RATHER THAN ASTRIDE - THE VICTIM) TO MAKE IT EASIER TO DO BACKSLAPS. IN 1976 THE ACADEMY WAS WARNED THAT THIS REDESIGNED POSITION COULD CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY TO THE LIVER AND SPLEEN. NONETHELESS, THIS REDESIGNED POSITION WAS PLACED ON HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF POSTERS AND TRAINING MANUALS DISTRIBUTED THROUGH THE AMERICAN RED CROSS AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES.

RECENTLY AN ACADEMY COMMITTEE ADMITTED THAT THE REDESIGNED RESCUER-BESIDE-VICTIM POSITION CAN CAUSE INTERNAL INJURY AND ADVISED THAT DR. HEIMLICH'S ORIGINAL ASTRIDE POSITION BE USED. NO WARNING ABOUT THE DANGEROUSNESS OF THESE POSTERS HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE PUBLIC, NOR HAS THE ACADEMY ACTED TO WITHDRAW THEM.

IN THE INTEREST OF SAVING LIVES AND PREVENTING INJURY, DR. PATRICK ASKS FOR THE RECALL OF THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF POSTERS AND

TRAINING MANUALS WHICH DISPLAY THIS DANGEROUS RESCUER-KNEELING-BESIDE-VICTIM POSITION.

SECOND, DR. PATRICK IS CALLING FOR A CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES TO INVESTIGATE DEATHS AND INJURIES CAUSED BY METHODS NOW RECOMMENDED BY THE ACADEMY.

THESE STEPS ARE CRITICAL SINCE 4000 PEOPLE DIE EACH YEAR IN THE UNITED STATES FROM CHOKING; RECOMMENDATION OF AN INEFFECTIVE OR DANGEROUS TREATMENT FOR CHOKING MAY BE MORE SERIOUS THAN FAULTY DC 10'S.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

DR. EDWARD A. PATRICK, M.D., PH.D.

PROMINENT PHYSICIAN-ENGINEER; FULL-PROFESSOR OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY, WEST LAFAYETTE, IN

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PRACTICING EMERGENCY PHYSICIAN AND MEMBER OF AMERICAN COLLEGE OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS

AUTHOR OF OVER 100 SCIENTIFIC PAPERS AND 3 TEXTBOOKS

DID ORIGINAL WORK ON FOOD-CHOKING AND INTRODUCED HEIMLICH MANEUVER TO STATE OF INDIANA IN 1975

END!

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