

Short Communication

Self-retaining aural speculum: a valuable aid to middle-ear surgery

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Abstract

We report the use of a self-retaining aural speculum that provides an excellent view of the middle ear through a small endural incision. We have found this instrument of value in tympanoplasty and stapes surgery in particular.

Key words: Surgical Instruments; Tympanoplasty; Stapes Surgery

Retractors are essential in otological surgery as they give good exposure of the operation field and facilitate working with both hands. We report the use of a simple self-retaining aural speculum (Figures 1 and 2) for middle-ear surgery through a small endural incision. This instrument gives an excellent view of the middle-ear cavity (Figure 3) either when used alone or with another instrument such as a Plester self-retaining retractor. Otologists who utilize endural incisions for stapes surgery and second stage ossiculoplasty will find this instrument of value.

The self-retaining aural speculum was designed by the senior author (TNR) and constructed by Aesculap (UK) Ltd. It is made of steel and has a matt finish to reduce light reflection from the microscope. It is a bivalve speculum with two small teeth on both ends and is less traumatic compared to the commonly used self-retaining retractors. The handle and other components are a miniature design replica of the conventional angled mastoid retractor. The senior author has used this instrument for tympanoplasties and stapes surgery for many years in the department. The modified self-retaining aural speculum is available from Aesculap (UK) Ltd.

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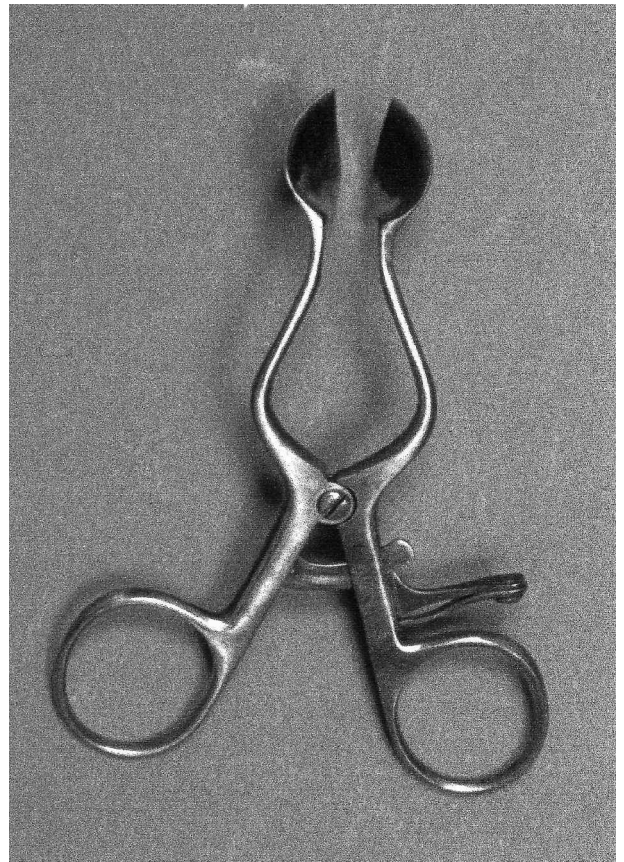


FIG. 1
Self-retaining aural speculum.

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FIG. 2
Self-retaining aural speculum; side view.

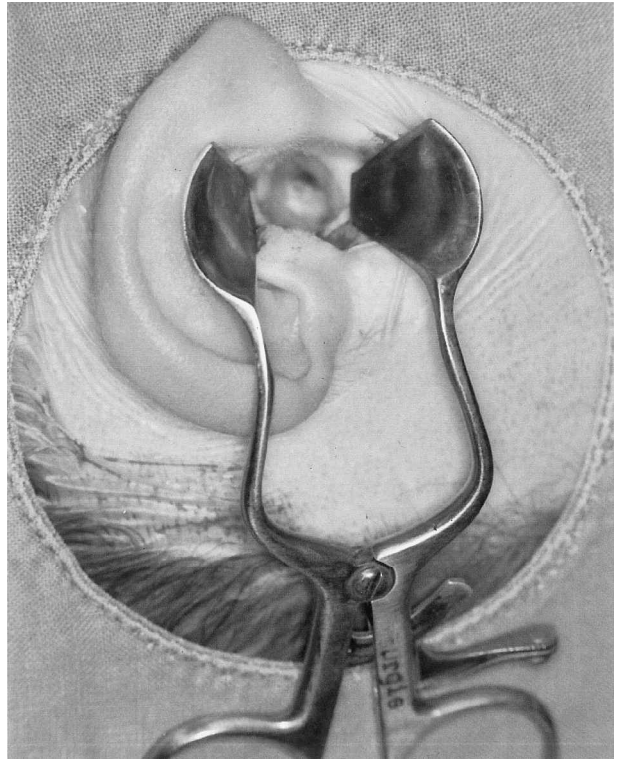


FIG. 3
Self-retaining aural speculum in position on a patient. Note the wide exposure and excellent view of the tympanic membrane.