

*Quantitative Modeling of Intubation at  
Scale*  
*An Open-Source Intubation Calculator*

*Sean Runnels MD*

*Associate Prof Anesthesiology  
University of Utah*

*Cam Norris MD*  
*Assistant Prof Anesthesiologist  
University of Utah*

# *Disclosures*

## Runnels

Associate Professor at the University of Utah

Inventor of Runnels Steerable Introducer

CEO of TTCmed.com

Co-Director of ASA/FAER Swimming with Sharks

## Norris

None

# Understanding Objectives

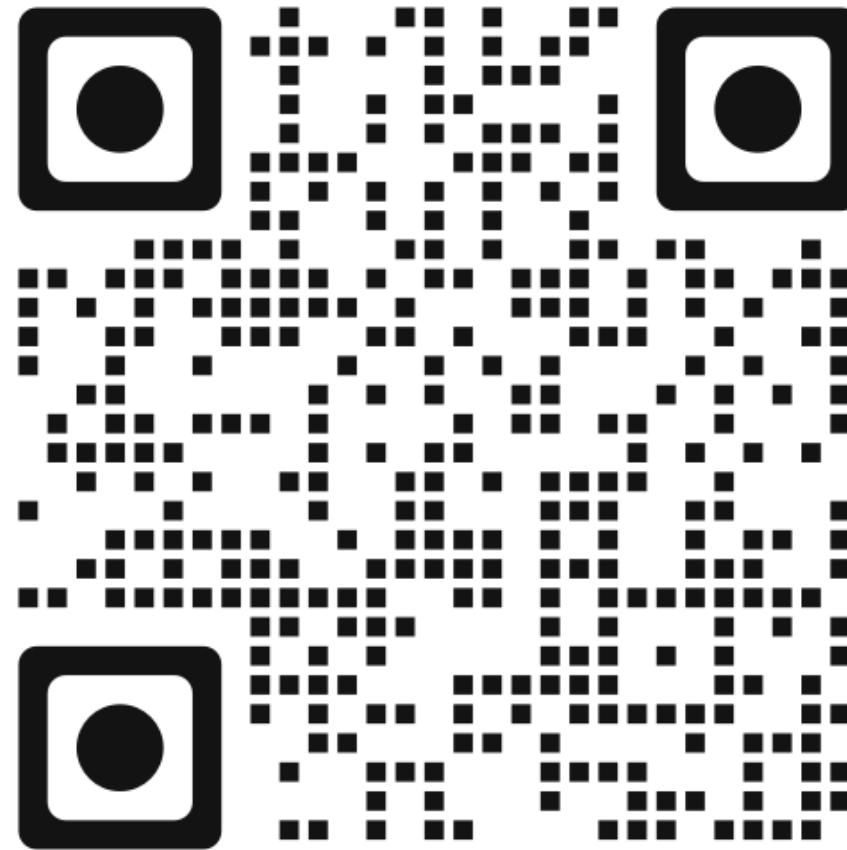
- Modeling DL era to VL era transition
  - Clinical outcomes
  - Economic outcomes
  - Cause and scaled impact of first pass failure

# Why Build a Mathematical Model of Intubation Practices??

- Data Integration
- Scenario Building
- Prediction and insight
- Scaling Outcomes
- Decision Support



# Link to Calculator



<https://sites.google.com/view/intubation-calculator/edicu-intubation-calculator>

# Intubation Calculator

*Thinking at Population Scale*

To begin, select your intubation location below.

ED/ICU

Operating Room

WAMM 2025 Abstract

# Questions for the Calculator



***What is the main cause of  
first pass failure  
as VL use increases?***



DL Clinical Problem!

**“Can Not See”**

***Visualization Failure***

# VL Clinical Problem!

***“I Can See The Cords, But I Can’t Deliver  
the Tube!”***

## ***Tracheal Access Failure***

A prospective cohort evaluation of the McGrath™ MAC  
videolaryngoscope in a series of 979 cases

Hannah M. Phelan <sup>a</sup>, Sarah L. Stobbs <sup>a</sup>, Massimiliano Sorbello <sup>b</sup>, Patrick A. Ward <sup>c</sup>,  
Alistair F. McNarry <sup>c,d,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> South East Scotland School of Anaesthesia, Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, EH16 4SA, UK

<sup>b</sup> Anesthesia and Intensive Care, AOU Policlinico San Marco Catania, Italy

<sup>c</sup> NHS Lothian, St John's Hospital, Howden, Livingston, EH54 6PP, UK

<sup>d</sup> NHS Lothian, Western General Hospital, Crewe Road South, Edinburgh, EH4 2XU, UK



[Intubation Calculator](#)

[Home](#) · [ED/ICU Intubation Calculator](#) · [OR Intubation Calculator](#) · [FAQ](#)

# Intubation Calculator

*Thinking at Population Scale*

To begin, select your intubation location below.

[ED/ICU](#)

[Operating Room](#)

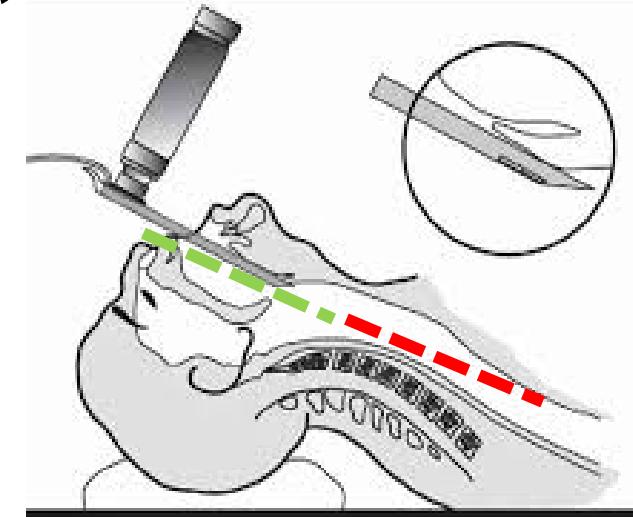
WAMM 2025 Abstract

# VL vs DL Krieger 2023 (OR)



*First pass rate*

- VL 94%
- DL 82%



## Failure Mode

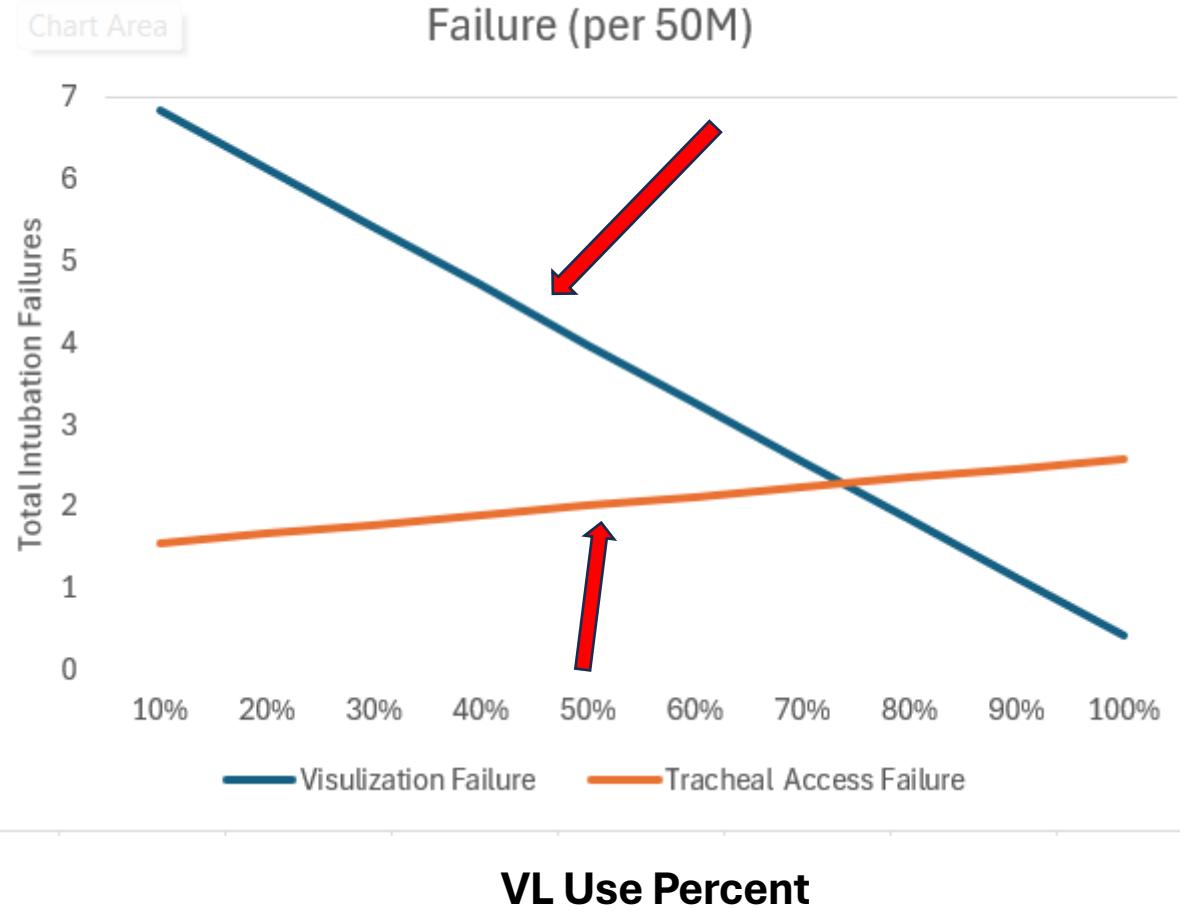
	DL	VL
Visualization	84%	14%
Tracheal access	16%	86%

# First Pass Failure and Attempt Failure Mode

## OR intubations (Krieger 2023)

Operating Room Intubation Failures Calculator								
INSTRUCTIONS		Enter the total number of intubations --->						
Total number of first pass intubation failures for a given VL and DL usage. To use enter the total number of intubations to be analyzed. Conceptually, this may be the total number of intubations globally, nationally, institutionally etc.		25,000,000						
VL Use	DL Use	VL First Pass Failure Rate (Krieger et al.)	DL First Pass Failure Rate (Krieger et al.)	VL First Pass Failures	DL First Pass Failures	Total First Pass Failures	Visualization Failures	Tracheal Acces. Failures
10%	90%	6%	18%	150,000	4,050,000	4,200,000	3,423,000	777,000
20%	80%	6%	18%	300,000	3,600,000	3,900,000	3,066,000	834,000
30%	70%	6%	18%	450,000	3,150,000	3,600,000	2,709,000	891,000
40%	60%	6%	18%	600,000	2,700,000	3,300,000	2,352,000	948,000
50%	50%	6%	18%	750,000	2,250,000	3,000,000	1,995,000	1,005,000
60%	40%	6%	18%	900,000	1,800,000	2,700,000	1,638,000	1,062,000
70%	30%	6%	18%	1,050,000	1,350,000	2,400,000	1,281,000	1,119,000
80%	20%	6%	18%	1,200,000	900,000	2,100,000	924,000	1,176,000
90%	10%	6%	18%	1,350,000	450,000	1,800,000	567,000	1,233,000
100%	0%	6%	18%	1,500,000	0	1,500,000	210,000	1,290,000

## Cause-Specific Rates of OR First-Pass Intubation Failure (per 50M)



# Insight

As VL use increases:

Total first pass failures decrease

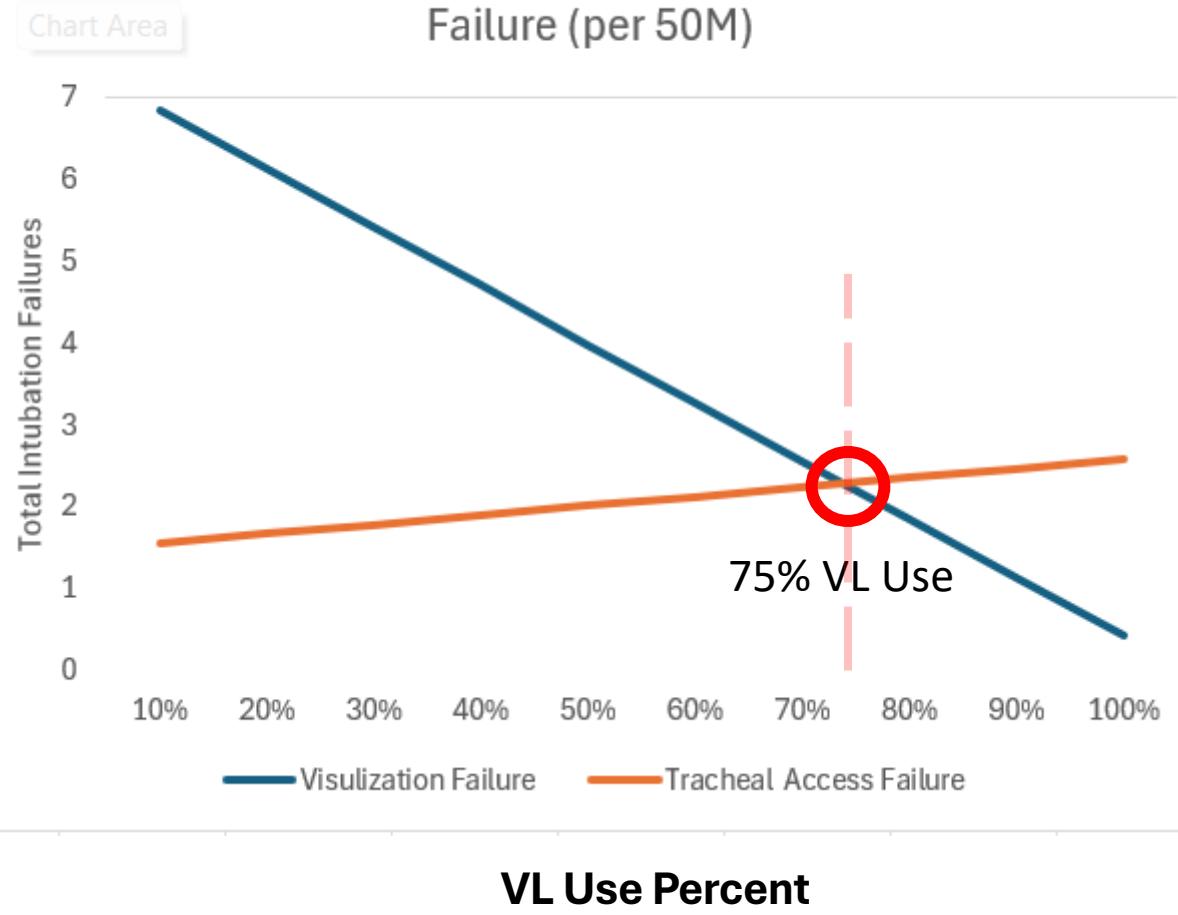
First pass failure due to ***visualization*** decreases

First pass failure due to ***tracheal access issues*** increases

# ***When Will Failure of Tracheal Access Overtake Failure of Visualization As the Main Cause of First Pass Failure??***

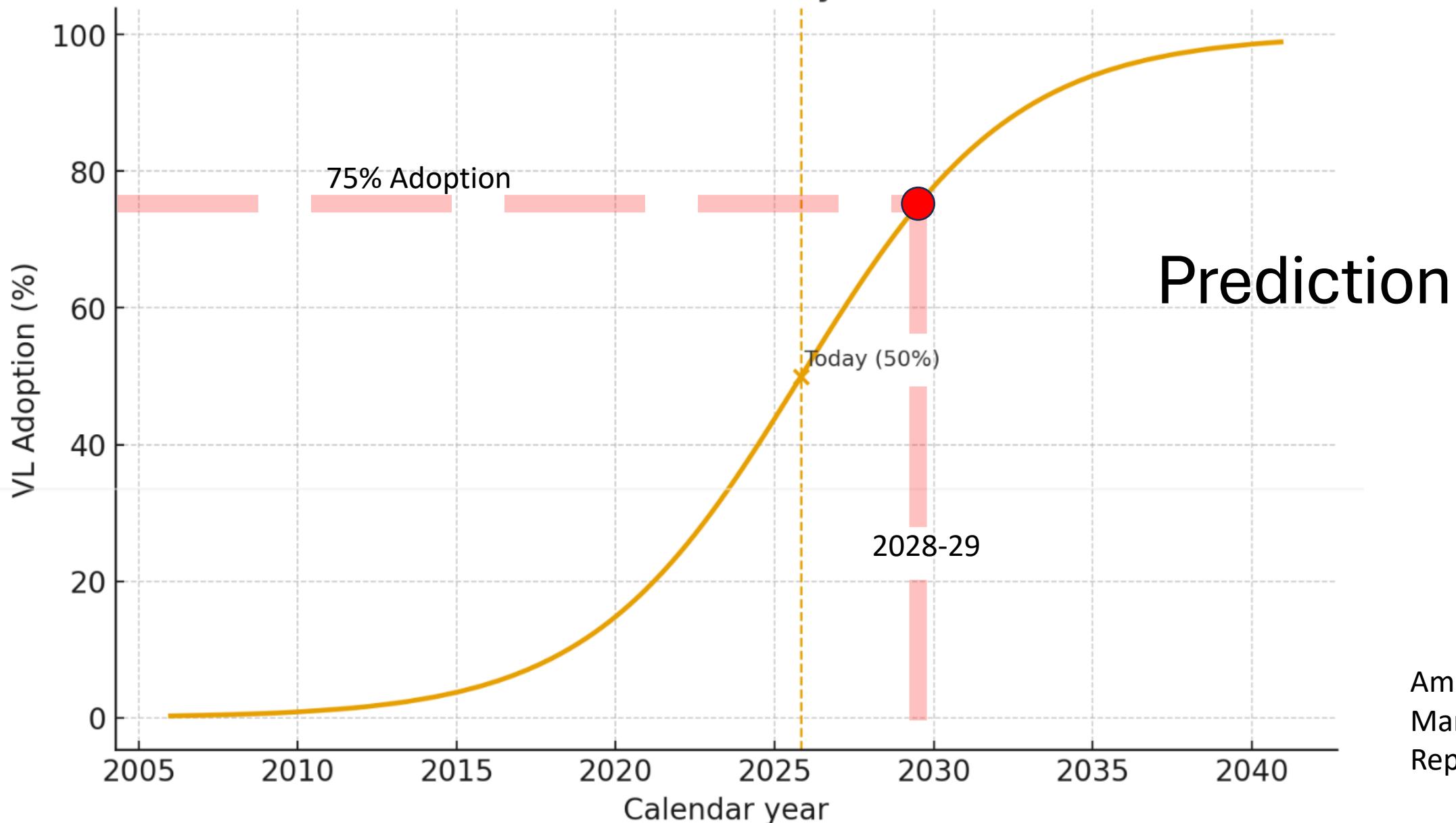


## Cause-Specific Rates of OR First-Pass Intubation Failure (per 50M)



# VL Market Adoption — Logistic (Sigmoid) Curve

Introduced 2006; 50% by Oct 31, 2025



*What Is the Excess Cost of 3+ Intubation Attempts in OR per Year in the USA??*



Economic Cost and Scale

# COST BURDEN ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFICULT INTUBATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Karen Phillips [1](#), Abstracts / Trends in Anaesthesia and Critical Care 30 (2020) e1ee192

Inpatient Surgical Admissions	N <sup>a</sup>	Median Cost
Admissions with difficult intubations	4,598	\$33,171
Admissions without difficult intubations	9,980,862	\$12,940
Cost difference		\$20,231



## Operating Room — Intubation Failures Calculator

Outputs match **Table 1** exactly. Only G3 is editable.

G3 — Total number of intubations

editable

All results update instantly.

25000000

Scenario	Total First Pass Failures	Visualization Failures	Tracheal Access Failures	Intubations Requiring $\geq$ 3 Attempts
20% VL + 80% DL	3,900,000	3,066,000	834,000	390,000
100% VL + 0% DL	1,500,000	210,000	1,290,000	150,000
<b>Difference</b>	2,400,000	2,856,000	-456,000	240,000

Calculations: B-row = total FP failures; C-row = visualization-related failures; D-row = tracheal-access-related failures; E-row = 10% of FP failures.

**20% VL**

$\$20,000 \times 390,000 = \$7.8 \text{ Billion}$

**100% VL**

$\$20,000 \times 150,000 = \$3.9 \text{ Billion}$

*Savings....\$3.9 Billion*

***Should I do 30% of my intubations with DL to keep up my DL skills??***



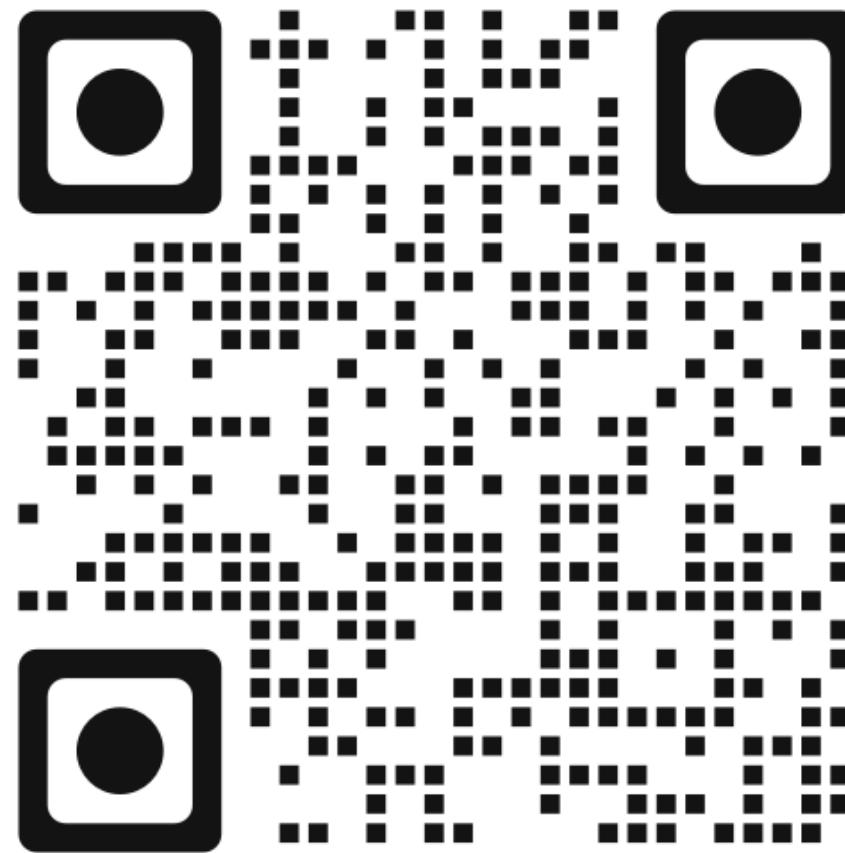
Decision Support

# The Cost of Retaining DL Skills

- 30% of intubations with DL

	ED/ICU (10M)	OR (50M)
First Pass Failures @ 30% DL	1,919,000	4,800,000
First Pass Failures@ 100% VL	1,490,000	3,000,000
Excess First Pass Failures	429,000	1,800,000
Excess Deaths and costs		

# Link to Calculator



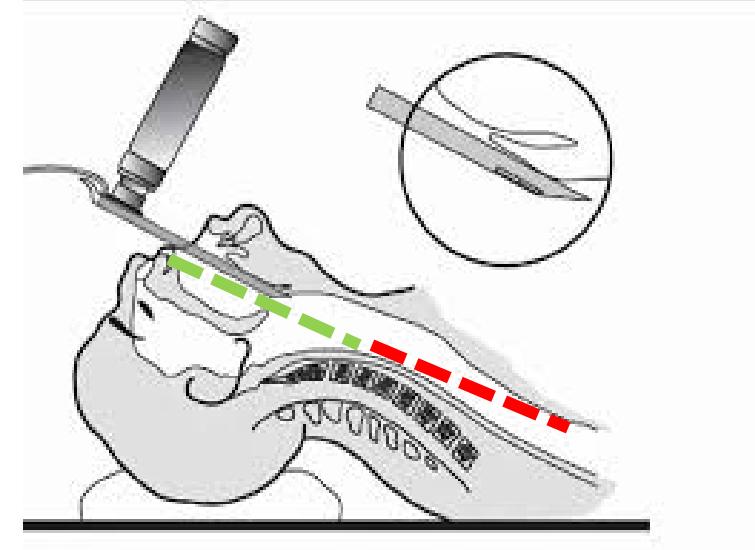
<https://sites.google.com/view/intubation-calculator/edicu-intubation-calculator>

*What Is the cost in 28-day ICU mortality at 20% VL use and 100% VL use?*



Clinical Cost and Scale

# VL vs DL Prekker 2023 (ED ICU)



## First pass rate

- VL 85.1%
- DL 70.8%

## Failure Mode

	DL	VL
Visualization	71%	34%
Tracheal access	29%	66%

JAMA | Original Investigation | CARING FOR THE CRITICALLY ILL PATIENT

## Intubation Practices and Adverse Peri-intubation Events in Critically Ill Patients From 29 Countries

Vincenzo Russotto, MD; Sheila Nainan Myatra, MD; John G. Laffey, MD, MA; Elena Tassistro, MS;

Linked

**# of intubation attempts**

**major adverse events**

***28 Day ICU mortality***

# National Scale Critically III (5 Million Per Year)

## ED/ICU Critically III Intubations

Only **G3** (Total number of intubations) is editable. Results update instantly.

G3 — Total number of intubations		editable				
Scenario	Total First Pass Failures	Major Adverse Events	28-Day Deaths	Visualization Failures	Tracheal Access Failures	
<b>20% VL + 80% DL</b>	1,310,000	694,300	90,953	874,600	435,400	
<b>100% VL + 0% DL</b>	750,000	397,500	52,073	255,000	495,000	
<b>Difference</b>	560,000	296,800	38,881	619,600	-59,600	

Definitions: FP Failures = total  $\times$  (VL%  $\times$  VL\_FP + DL%  $\times$  DL\_FP). MAE = FP Failures  $\times$  0.53. 28-day deaths = MAF  $\times$  0.131. Visualization/Tracheal Access split uses VL/DL-specific proportions.