

The Evidence-Based Truth

Adapted from *A Prospective & Qualitative Prehospital Comparison of Head Immobilization Devices**

SpeedBlocks Head Immobilizer vs. reusable foam blocks.

Many providers purchase their equipment based in part on product studies and surveys. Many services will not change their purchasing decisions without such evidence. Unfortunately, studies on immobilization devices are rare. There is, however, a recent study whose results clearly indicate a preference for the SpeedBlocks® Head Immobilizer from Laerdal Medical versus reusable foam blocks.* Here are the up-to-date, evidence-based reasons to help make your choice of head immobilization device crystal clear.



Participants in the recent study rated the SpeedBlocks device as superior to reusable foam blocks in these categories:*

Feature	SpeedBlocks	vs.	Reusable Foam Blocks
	Superior		Superior
Usefulness in good weather	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Usefulness in bad weather	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Speed of application	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
How secure immobilization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of re-adjustment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of visualization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of cleaning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Confidence in cleaning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

*See poster presentation of A Prospective & Qualitative Prehospital Comparison of Head Immobilization Devices on reverse side.

How does your head immobilizer rate?

To learn more about the SpeedBlocks Head Immobilizer, or any of Laerdal's quality products, please call (877) LAERDAL, visit www.Laerdal.com or contact your local Authorized Laerdal Distributor.



A Prospective & Qualitative Prehospital Comparison of Head Immobilization Devices.¹

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Introduction

The immobilization of patients with a potential cervical spine injury is a basic skill taught to prehospital providers. Methods for immobilizing such patients lack standardization in terms of technique and equipment. This study prospectively evaluated trained, experienced prehospital providers' opinions on the immobilization qualities of an adjustable, rigid-head immobilization device that integrates disposability as a cleaning method.

Methods

Provider perceptions of ease of use, ease of cleaning and immobilization characteristics were evaluated with a 5-point Likert Scale. A 14-item questionnaire was distributed at the beginning of the study period to compare SpeedBlocks with the device they have used in the past. Participants were trained in the proper application of the SpeedBlocks device. A 12-item questionnaire was completed each time an individual user applied cervical immobilization during the course of the study period. A paired t-test was performed to compare the provider opinions. Statistical significance was set at $p \leq 0.05$.

Results

The questionnaire was structured to reflect opinions regarding the following categories: perceived usefulness in good weather and bad, speed of application, how securely the head was immobilized, ease of storage in the ambulance, how easily the device could be readjusted, how easily the patient's head and neck could be visualized after application, how easily the device could be cleaned, and how confident the participant was in that cleaning. Participants rated the Speedblocks device as superior to reusable foam blocks in all categories except ease of storage ($p = 0.056$). This result was interpreted as equivalent to reusable foam blocks. Particularly strong responses were measured in the categories of usefulness in good weather, speed of application, how securely the head was immobilized, how easily the device could be readjusted, how easily the patient's head and neck could be visualized after application, and confidence in cleaning.

Conclusion

These results indicate a preference for a new device, SpeedBlocks, over traditional reusable foam blocks, specifically in several areas. These data should be used by emergency medical services to support evidence-based medical treatment decisions and by manufacturers to develop more usable, efficacious products.

¹Poster presentation as it appeared in the Prehospital Care Research Forum EMS Today JEMS Supplement, March, 2004. Poster presentation won Prehospital Care Research Forum Best Poster, 2004 EMS Today, Salt Lake City, Utah.

For a free, full reprint of the entire paper, please visit www.Laerdal.com or call (877) LAERDAL and reference P/N 100-477-00.



The SpeedBlocks® Head Immobilizer from Laerdal Medical. The first high-performance reusable at the cost of a disposable.

For additional information or to order, contact your local Authorized Laerdal Distributor!

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