Isolated subglossopalatal membrane: a rare entity to encounter

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DESCRIPTION
Subglossopalatal membrane is a fibrous connection extending from the floor of the mouth to the palate. There are case reports of this condition being associated with other congenital anomalies and syndromes. However, isolated subglossopalatal membrane has never been reported in the literature. Earlier, it was believed to be a surgical emergency; however, a recent report has shown that surgical outcome is better if the newborn is stabilised with primary management. This comprises supplemental oxygen, antibiotics and intravenous fluid followed by surgical excision.

A 2-day-old full-term male neonate presented to the Department of Paediatric Surgery, King George’s Medical University, with a membrane detected incidentally by the mother during feeding. The patient did not have any evidence of respiratory distress. On examination, there was a membrane extending from the floor of the mouth to the junction of the soft and hard palate (figures 1 and 2). Lateral extension was from the right molar trigone to the left molar trigone. There was a small rent in the middle of the membrane. Respiratory distress probably did not occur due to this defect. This subglossopalatal membrane was an isolated congenital anomaly in this patient.

Learning points
- Presence of subglossopalatal membrane in isolation is an extremely rare anomaly.
- In cases of complete subglossopalatal membrane, it may present as acute respiratory distress in newborns.
- Splitting of the membrane or a natural rent decreases the severity of respiratory distress.

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REFERENCES