

Workshop 1: Airway Management in the ICU- Navigating the Physiological Frontier

Introduction

Airway management in the intensive care unit remains one of the most hazardous procedures, with complication rates higher than those seen in the controlled environment of the operating theatre. The 2026 workshop on Airway Management is built upon the foundational updates of the 2025 Difficult Airway Society DAS guidelines, which represent a paradigm shift from “managing failure” to “maximizing first-pass success”.

Clinical Context

The primary focus of the workshop is the “physiologically difficult airway”. Unlike the anatomically difficult airway, which is predicted by physical features like the Mallampati score or thyromental distance, the physiologically difficult airway is defined by systemic instability. Patients in the ICU often suffer from “the H’s”: hypoxemia, hypotension and high metabolic acidosis, all of which narrow the “safe apnea time”.

Aims & Objectives

The workshop aims to standardize a proactive, safety-first approach to ICU intubation across Kenyan hospitals, utilizing the latest pharmacological and mechanical tools.

- Implementation of the Plan A to Plan D linear algorithm, with a focus on rapid progression in the event of failure to prevent prolonged hypoxia.
- Mastery of video laryngoscopy as the primary intubation modality, utilizing both standard and hyper-angulated blades to ensure first-pass success.
- Application of pre-oxygenation strategies, including High-Flow Nasal Oxygen (HFNO) and Non-invasive ventilation (NIV), to extend safe apnea periods in physiologically fragile patients.
- Techniques for ultrasound-guided identification of the cricothyroid membrane, ensuring that Plan D (Emergency Front-of-Neck Airway) is a viable and rapid rescue option.
- Integration of Human Factors and Crisis Resource Management (CRM), emphasizing the role of team briefing, role allocation, and the use of cognitive aids.

Program Schedule: Airway Management (09:00 AM – 01:20 PM)

The program is structured to provide an immersive experience, combining short didactic updates with intensive rotating skill stations.

Time	Session Title	Focus and Key Components
09:00 - 09:30	The New Standard: DAS 2025 Update	Review of the 65 new recommendations; The shift toward universal video laryngoscopy.
09:30 - 10:20	Skill Station 1: Plan A - The Perfect Attempt	Use of VL (e.g., Mindray A-Series), bougies, and stylets; Optimizing the view.
10:20 - 11:10	Skill Station 2: Physiological Optimization	HFNO and NIV setups for the "RAMP" position in obese and hypoxemic patients.
11:10 - 11:30	Networking & Industry Showcase	Direct engagement with sponsors of airway devices and pre-oxygenation tools.
11:30 - 12:20	Skill Station 3: Plan B & C - Rescue Ventilation	Second-generation supraglottic airways (SADs) and optimized facemask ventilation.
12:20 - 12:50	Skill Station 4: Plan D - Scalpel-Bougie-Tube	Ultrasound landmarking and the surgical airway technique for ICU rescue.
12:50 - 13:20	Synthesis: CRM and Post-Intubation Care	Documentation of the "Airway Course" and strategy for the next clinician.