Methods to prevent water entering the ear: An ear cap

Sir,

There is a need to prevent water from entering the ears while bathing or swimming particularly in patients with ear infections and those who have undergone ear surgery.

Nonoperated persons can wear ear plugs when swimming or bathing, but the ear plugs tend to slip out in infected ears unless held in place by a headband if it is for bilateral use. However, headbands do not allow a complete hair wash. Ear putties made of silicone or even the simple blue tacks serve the same purpose, but these are difficult to clean on a daily basis and are often expensive with a possibility of getting stuck in the ears.

In the tropics where ear plugs are not available or difficult to get, patients are advised to plug the ear with cotton and apply something oily to create an oil barrier to prevent water from getting in. These are obviously not suitable for bathing/swimming where the cotton inevitably balls slip out and cause an embarrassing scene.

An ear cap has been designed similar to the design of a shower or swimming cap that is made of a water impermeable material/plastic, stitched, and held with an elastic band or a purse string which can be tightened [Figure 1a and b].

These have been tried on volunteers who showered and the ears checked with an otoscope after toweling their heads. Their external ears were dry. Later, these have been tried on patients and found to be satisfactory, comfortable, affordable, and disposable. Patients seem to prefer the ear caps to the use of cotton balls. It must be mentioned that even these covers do not protect the postaural incision wound.

Financial support and sponsorship
Nil.

Conflicts of interest
There are no conflicts of interest.

Rajagopalan Raman
Department of Otolaryngology, Faculty of Medicine, University Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Address for correspondence: Dr. Rajagopalan Raman, Department of Otolaryngology, Faculty of Medicine, University Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. E-mail: ramanr_99@yahoo.com

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as the author is credited and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

How to cite this article: Raman R. Methods to prevent water entering the ear: An ear cap. Indian J Otol 2016;22:143.