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Efficacy of a Creon delayed-release pancreatic enzyme protocol for clearing occluded enteral feeding tubes

Janice L Stumpf¹, Rebecca M Kurian, Jennifer Vuong, Kimberlyn Dang, Michael D Kraft

Affiliations + expand

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Abstract

Background: Alkalinized Viokase pancreatic enzyme tablets restored patency to 71.9% of occluded Dobhoff tubes in a prospective study. After removal of Viokase tablets from the US market, the hospital protocol for unclogging enteral feeding tubes was adapted to use Creon pancreatic enzyme delayed-release capsules, despite the lack of published data.

Objective: To evaluate the effectiveness of a Creon-based protocol to clear occluded enteral feeding tubes.

Methods: This retrospective study included all adult and pediatric patients seen in the emergency department or in an inpatient setting who received Creon 12 000 units lipase delayed-release capsule dissolved in a solution of sodium bicarbonate 650 mg and sterile water for clearing occluded enteral feeding tubes between May 1 and November 30, 2010. The Creon protocol was deemed effective if tube clearance was documented in the medical record or if enteral feedings were resumed with no note regarding tube replacement.

Results: Alkalinized Creon delayed-release capsules were administered to 83 patients with a total of 118 clogged tubes. Three poorly documented cases and 5 tubes with mechanical dogs were excluded from data analysis. Patency was restored to 53 of 110 (48.2%) occluded tubes. More than 1 treatment course was attempted in 5 cases, with success in 3.

Conclusion: An alkalinized Creon pancreatic enzyme protocol was effective in clearing approximately half of the occluded enteral feeding tubes in this retrospective study, an efficacy rate much less than that previously reported in the literature with a Viokase-based protocol.