

THE HISTORY OF ANAESTHESIA



The use of anaesthesia dates back to 300 BC (the Alexandrian Period) when the juice from the mandrake plant was used. During the same period, The Egyptians induced unconsciousness by compression of the carotid artery. First report of the use of 'inhalation anaesthesia' was reported in the 12th century. In the process described natural sponges were soaked in the solutions of opium, cannabis, mandrake and henbane and then dried. When required the sponges were heated in hot water and the vapors produced were used for inducing inhalation anaesthesia. However the results were quite unreliable. Instead for carrying out any surgical procedure nerves and blood vessels supplying to the area of the body were compressed and this method of achieving desensitization remained popular until the discovery of ether and nitrous oxide. During the same period the Chinese used hashish for achieving anaesthesia/unconsciousness.

Some important developments in the field of anaesthesia are listed below:

Sr. No.	Name of scientist	Year	Important development
1.	Paracelsus	1540	Produced ether and for GA in a fowl
2.	Humphrey Davy	1800	Discovered nitrous oxide
3.	HH Hickman	1824	Suggested use of carbon dioxide for painless surgery in animals
4.	W. Clarke	1842	Used ether for dental extraction in human beings
5.	Dr. Horace Wells	1844	Described anaesthetic properties of nitrous oxide
6.	Flourens	1847	Described the use of chloroform for anaesthesia in animals
7.	Pirogoff	1847	Introduced rectal anaesthesia in animals using chloral hydrate Chloral hydrate first time used in horses in 1908; Dogs & cats: 1930
8.	Dr. CT Jackson	1853	Extensively used ether in animals
9.	Dadd	1854	Routinely used ether and chloroform for GA in animals in USA
10.	Ore	1875	Published monograph on IV anaesthesia using chloral hydrate
11.	Anrep	1878	Suggested use of cocaine for local anaesthesia
12.	Hatsted	1879	Described nerve blocks
13.	Koller	1884	Introduced use of cocaine as local anaesthetic for eye
14.	GL Corning	1885	Described use of cocaine for spinal anaesthesia in dogs
15.	Reclus & Schleich	1890 & 1892	Described use of infiltration anaesthesia
16.	August Bier	1898	Described spinal anaesthesia in animals, himself & his assistant
17.	Cuillie & Sendrail	1901	Described subarachnoid anaesthesia in horses, cattle & dogs
18.	Cathelin	1901	Described epidural anaesthesia in dogs
19.	Sellheim	1909	Described paralumber anaesthesia in man
20.	Retzgen, Benesch and Brook	1920	Described epidural anaesthesia in large animals
21.		1930	Barbiturates introduced in animals
22.	Farquharson & Formston	1940	Described paralumber anaesthesia in cattle
23.	Charpentier	1950	Introduced phenothiazine as tranquillizer in large animals
24.	1956	First time Halothane used clinically in veterinary science
25.	-	1971	Xylazine and ketamine introduced
26.	1985	Isoflurane released for veterinary clinical use
27.		1989	Propofol introduced
28.	1993	Desflurane released for veterinary clinical use
29.		1999	Sevoflurane introduced