

ABSTRACT

The incidence of awareness of intraoperative events, in 506 anaesthetized adult patients at three hospitals in Jamaica, was investigated.

Prospective and retrospective studies on the topic were also reviewed.

The overall incidence of awareness for the total study population was found to be 3% .

The incidence for the individual hospital was :

Victoria Jubilee Hospital (VJH)	- 4.3% ;
Spanish Town Hospital (STH)	- 3.5% ;
University Hospital of the West (UCH)	- 2.4% .

The physical characteristics of the patients did not appear to influence the incidence of awareness. However, the patient's preoperative emotional state appeared to influence the occurrence of intraoperative awareness.

A correlation between the incidence of awareness and some aspects of the anaesthetic techniques seemed to exist. This was also true for the duration of, and the type of operative procedure.

A higher incidence of awareness was observed in the shorter operative procedures. Also a higher incidence of awareness occurred in obstetrical emergency procedures when compared with other operative procedures.

Recommendations to prevent and/or minimize the occurrence of intraoperative awareness were suggested.