Introduction:
Current ICU sedation guidelines recommend strategies using non-benzodiazepine sedatives. Since the development of halogenated anesthetic reflectors, inhaled ICU sedation has become increasingly popular. This survey was undertaken to explore the use of volatile agents for ICU sedation in France

Methods:
Adult ICUs of the Société Française d’Anesthésie et Réanimation (SFAR) database were contacted by phone or email between July and August 2019.Heads of ICU were questioned about the characteristics of their department, their knowledge on inhaled sedation, and practical aspects of inhaled sedation use in their department

Results:
Among the 374 ICUs contacted, 187 provided responses (50%). Most ICU directors (73%) knew about the use of inhaled ICU sedation and 21% used inhaled sedation in their unit, mostly with the Anaesthetic Conserving Device (AnaConDa, Sedana Medical). Most intensivists had used volatile agents for sedation for <5 years (63%) and in <20 patients per year (75%), with their main indications being: failure of intravenous sedation, severe asthma, and acute respiratory distress syndrome. Sevoflurane and isoflurane were mainly used (88% and 20%, respectively). The main reasons for not using inhaled ICU sedation were: “device not available” (40%), “lack of medical interest” (37%), “lack of familiarity or knowledge about the technique” (35%) and “elevated cost” (21%). Most respondents (80%) were overall satisfied with the use of inhaled sedation. Almost 75% stated that inhaled sedation was a seducing alternative to intravenous sedation

Conclusion:
This survey highlights the widespread knowledge about inhaled ICU sedation in France but shows its limited use to date. Differences in education and knowledge, as well as the recent and relatively scarce literature on the use of volatile agents in the ICU, might explain the diverse practices that were observed. The low rate of mild adverse effects and the users’ satisfaction are promising for this potentially important tool for ICU sedation

Image: