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The birth of a new speciality: When rhinology, otology and laryngology collide

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A literature review was carried out using Google Scholar, Pubmed MEDLINE and Ovid EMBASE. The information was collated and drawn up as a timeline of significant events.

An array of literature was uncovered pertaining to the history of otology and laryngology compared to rhinology; analysis of these articles allowed for the creation of a timeline illustrating the key points in the history and origins of otorhinolaryngology. It shows the evolution of otology as a surgical specialty, laryngology as a predominantly medical specialty early on, and later rhinology which only became prominent in the 20th century.

Ear, nose and throat (ENT) is an emerging specialty which can be traced as far back as the ancient Egyptians, early Hindus and Greeks. Its evolution is varied; rhinology in chronological terms is in its infancy, nevertheless it has provided an indispensable access point for other specialties. As technology continues to develop the specialty is seeing a shift towards separation. A familiarity with the origin of otorhinolaryngology and the innovators responsible for the growth of the specialty is invaluable in helping us understand and overcome the limitations we encounter today.