Background: Obesity has reached epidemic proportions worldwide. In Latin America, 10% to 35% of the population is obese. Obese critically ill patients are at greater risk for requiring intubation and prolonged mechanical ventilation; and in some cases, it is necessary to perform a tracheostomy.

Objective: The objective of the study was to compare the incidence of perioperative complications associated with percutaneous tracheostomy (PT) using the fiberoptic bronchoscopy-assisted Ciaglia Blue Rhino technique (Cook Critical Care, Bloomington, IN) in obese vs nonobese critically ill patients. Patients and Method: A prospective evaluation was made of 120 patients who underwent PT because of prolonged mechanical ventilation. An analysis of the incidence of operative and early postoperative complications was performed comparing an obese patient group (n = 25) with a nonobese patient group (n = 80). Obesity was defined by a body mass index of at least 30 kg/m2.

Results: The 2 groups had no si