

Utilità del questionario e del RAST nello screening di operatori sanitari allergici al lattice

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KEY WORDS

Latex; healthcare workers; questionnaire for latex

SUMMARY

«Usefulness of a questionnaire and RAST in screening of health care workers allergic to latex». **Background:** *The prevalence of latex mediated IgE allergy in health care workers varies, according to the various studies, from 0.5% to 16.7%. The onset of latex allergy involves aspects concerning the worker's health, the need for job transfer and possible retraining. In any case, the use of latex gloves in health care environments cannot be discarded, since they offer more efficacious protection from biological agents, compared to gloves of different materials.* **Objectives:** *Our objectives were to verify the prevalence of latex allergy in a sample of 515 health care workers and evaluate the usefulness of RAST and a questionnaire especially organized to identify potentially allergic subjects, at the same time limiting the number of false positive and false negative results.* **Methods:** *515 health care workers of the ASUR Zone7-Ancona local health unit accepted to answer to a questionnaire and to undergo a RAST test for latex. Those with positive responses to the questionnaire or to RAST were later invited to undergo further allergological tests (prick and prick by prick). The questionnaire was revised according to the results obtained, thus increasing its positive predictiveness.* **Results:** *Prevalence of latex allergy in our sample was 1,7%, positive predictiveness of RAST was rather low (31.3%), but increased considerably if combined with the modified questionnaire (62.5%). The Prick by Prick test gave more specific results than the Prick test.* **Conclusions:** *The proposed questionnaire can reduce the number of false positive workers needing to undergo further allergological tests and may be usefully applied in the screening of latex mediated IgE allergy in health care workers.*