

# Allergia a lattice naturale. Gestione del paziente: dalla clinica alla prevenzione. Rassegna critica

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## KEY WORDS

Latex allergy; diagnosis; management; specific immunotherapy

## SUMMARY

*«Natural latex allergy. Patient management: from clinic to prevention. A review». The widespread use of latex devices has been followed, in the last 25 years, by an increase in IgE mediated sensitization. The clinical manifestations of latex allergy affect the skin (urticaria and angioneurotic oedema), the lower and the upper respiratory tracts (rhinoconjunctivitis, asthma and glottis oedema), and the cardiovascular system (anaphylaxis). There is also an anaphylactic risk during surgery and invasive diagnostic procedures. Vegetable food cross-reacts with latex so that more than half of the patients show specific IgE against some food. Further than traditional groups at risk, as health care workers, other work categories have to be protected, because of the inappropriate use of latex gloves (food or drug industry workers, mechanics, panel beaters and so on). Recently the latex most important allergenic fractions have been characterized and recombinant allergens are now available. The recombinant allergens allow a better standardization of the extracts for diagnostic use, the production of safer extracts for immunotherapy as well as a more accurate evaluation of food cross-reactions. The recombinant allergens will allow a more accurate dosage of latex concentrations in air and in objects and, in future, to establish threshold limit values. The main aims of prevention are the replacement of latex with alternative elastomers, the reduction of work and extra work exposure and an efficient health survey in working environment. The use of latex gloves and devices among general population has to be discouraged. Specific immunotherapy has to be considered a second choice and restricted to highly qualified workers in order to realize a rehabilitation to their previous jobs. The actually obtained protection must be verified.*