

Allergia a lattice. Approcci preventivi nelle Aziende Sanitarie: esperienze italiane a confronto. Risultati preliminari di un'indagine trasversale

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KEY WORDS

Latex allergy; health care workers; preventive measures; patient safety

SUMMARY

«**Latex allergy. Preventive measures in health care workers: a comparison of Italian experiences**». **Background:** We have performed a transversal study in different Italian Regions to underline the problem related to natural latex allergy. **Objectives:** The aim of the study was to determine the glove use on the basis of the materials gloves were made of, to identify the departments and the qualifications mainly interested in the latex allergy problem, to check the required features for gloves and other rubber devices at the moment of the purchase, as well as the presence of guidelines, of training and information activities for health care workers and procedures for sensitized patients. **Methods:** We sent a questionnaire to the local public Health Authorities (HA) in different Italian Regions. **Results:** Number and regional distribution of the answers received back did not have statistical significance. Anyway, from the elaboration of the data it has been possible to obtain some interesting observations on both a theoretical and an operational level. The results showed: a) the level of interest and attention to the latex allergy problem has increased a lot recently; b) there is a high use of latex gloves (>50% of HA), in particular in surgical and intensive care departments; c) there are differences on an operational level between HA, also between HA that are in the same Italian Region. It resulted a widespread delay in the replacement of latex devices (e.g. urinary and intravenous catheters) with devices made of alternative materials. However, we found a growing attention towards the procedures related to the purchase of gloves, towards the adoption of guidelines about the use of gloves and towards the training and the information of health care workers. **Conclusions:** From this study it has emerged clear the need of Italian HA to focus on the prevention of latex allergy, goal already obtained in a few, almost isolated, realities.