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Transmission of Pathogenic Bacterial Organisms in the Anesthesia Work Area

Randy W. Loftus, M.D., Matthew D. Koff, M.D., Corey C. Burchman, M.D., Joseph D. Schwartzman, M.D., Valerie Thorum, M.T. (A.S.C.P.), Megan E. Read, M.T. (A.S.C.P.), Tammara A. Wood, M.T. (A.M.T.), Michael L. Beach, M.D., Ph.D.

While the transmission of bacterial organisms in the anesthesia work area is a familiar subject, this article is one of the first to objectively study and document the issue.

The authors document the relationship between a stopcock contaminated with bacteria during a surgical procedure and the development of an infection.

- 32% of cases resulted in a bacteria contaminated stopcock. Contamination occurred early and is unrelated to factors of case duration, urgency or patient physical condition.
- 25% of patients (5 of 20) with bacteria contaminated stopcocks developed nosocomial infections. 2 of the 5 patients ultimately died after prolonged stays in the Intensive Care Unit.
- Only 12% of patients (5 of 41) without bacteria contaminated stopcocks developed nosocomial infections. There were no patient deaths in this group.

Key finding of the study: Implementation of infection control measures in the anesthesia work area may help reduce the development of infections.

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