

The objective of this study was to investigate the nationwide use of disposable and non-disposable venepuncture tourniquets and the standardised procedures for cleaning the tourniquets” Petersen and Nybo (2018).

Abstract:

Tourniquets are widely used to make the vein more visible prior to blood collection. Venepuncture tourniquets are however a non-sterile and potentially reusable equipment. Several studies have shown that they are colonised by a variety of pathogenic bacteria and consecutively use of the same tourniquet on multiple patients will increase the risk of a nosocomial infection. This matter is however only scarcely studied. The objective of this study was to investigate the nationwide use of disposable and non-disposable venepuncture tourniquets and the standardised procedures for cleaning the tourniquets. A questionnaire concerning use and cleaning of tourniquets was therefore sent to all major Danish clinical biochemistry laboratories (n = 12). All but one laboratory had a local procedure for usage and handling of tourniquets, including structured procedures for cleaning. Despite this, only 75% of laboratories had a guideline for cleaning the tourniquets and only 50% had a specified cleaning program. At the hospitals using non-disposable tourniquets the handling differed considerably and at two hospitals the tourniquets were only cleaned once a week, while one laboratory did not clean the tourniquet before it was visibly stained. Of note, five of the eight hospitals using disposable tourniquets only disposed the tourniquets on a daily basis. In conclusion, there is a lack of guidelines for handling tourniquets in 25-33% of the hospitals and a number of hospitals used both types (disposable and non-disposable), which could confuse the handling of the tourniquets. A national guideline for usage and cleaning of venepuncture tourniquets is therefore strongly recommended.

Reference:

Petersen, E.R.B. and Nybo, M. (2018) Hygiene of venepuncture tourniquets in Denmark. Scandinavian Journal of Clinical and Laboratory Investigation. June 10th. .



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