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Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behavior of Operating Room Staff

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Angelillo and coinvestigators from the Medical School, University of Catanzaro Magna, Graecia, Italy, have reported on a study that examined the disinfection and sterilization practices used by hospital operating rooms and evaluated the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of nursing staff with regard to infection control. Of the 216 nurses who responded, knowledge concerning such practices was not consistent, since 10% did not believe that items should be rinsed in water after contact with glutaraldehyde and more than 25% thought that 10-minute contact time provided ster-

ilization. Almost all were aware that improper practices increased the risk of nosocomial infections in patients. Nurses in orthopedic surgery had a significantly lower level of knowledge compared with others. The great majority of nurses agreed that guidelines for disinfection and sterilization practice should be maintained and applied.

With regard to the use of surgical instruments, the majority used steam or dry-heat sterilizers for the appropriate time and temperature. Glutaraldehyde was used by 95% to sterilize endoscopes, but at different temperatures and times of exposure. Similar procedures were reported as used for laryngoscopes, although a higher percentage used heat steriliza-

tion. Only 38% routinely used all barrier techniques (gloves, masks, and protective eyewear). Predictors for the routine use of all barrier techniques included attendance at continuing education courses on nosocomial infections, nurses who were male, and nurses involved in orthopedic operations. Data support the need for finding and implementing interventions related to the prevention of hospital infection activities, to motivate nurses to use the correct procedures as a routine.

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