

Reutilization of medical equipment

*Domingo M. Braile**
*Moacir Fernandes de Godoy***

*See related articles on
pages 328 and 334*

Controversial issues always rouse feelings and stimulate discussion with the intention of increasing development and the evolution of science. Thus, in this edition, there are two articles that apparently seem conflicting, but due to the current circumstances and the practical applicability, they deserve special attention.

In the first, a true clinical work, Batista et al. [1] study 60 patients submitted to balloon angioplasty of the coronary artery, in which adverse clinical events were compared with the reuse of medical equipment, concluding that “there was no association between the reuse of medical hospital products on the performance of coronary transluminal angioplasty and occurrence of clinical events suggesting the possibility of reuse, as long as rigid protocols of quality control are adopted”.

On the other hand, in a review article of Ribeiro et al. [2], the authors appraise publications in Medline/Pubmed and LILACS, on the effects of hemodynamic catheter recycling, from mechanical, physical, chemical and biological viewpoints. After a critical analysis of 21 publications they conclude that “the hygiene and the sterilization of the catheters were not efficient as debris and microorganisms were identified at the end of the process” and highlight “the importance of this information when taking a decision in relation to the recycling and reuse of hemodynamic catheters”.

What called our attention is that of the 23 bibliographical references assessed in the article, 18 (78.3%) were published in the year 2000 or before, with several prior to 1990. The fast qualitative evolution of catheters utilized in hemodynamics is well known, in particular, balloon catheters used for coronary

angioplasties, which leads to a necessity to better understand the behavior of these new products in respect to the processes necessary for their reutilization.

At a time when the National Association of Health Inspectors (ANVISA) is considering this question in respect to the possibility of reusing medical equipment, studies that support one view or the other are welcome and can only help to clarify this complicated and important question.

***Professor of the Medicine School in São José do Rio Preto and Unicamp. Director of Post Graduation of the Medicine School in São José do Rio Preto. Editor of the Brazilian Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery.**

****Professor of the Medicine School in São José do Rio Preto. Head of Hemodynamics and Interventionist Cardiology of Hospital de Base in São José do Rio Preto.**

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2. Ribeiro SMCP, Graziano KU, Alfa MM, Goveia VR. Reprocessamento de cateteres cardíacos: uma revisão. *Rev Bras Cir Cardiovasc.* 2006; 21(3):334-42.