Latex-Free Gloves: Safer for Whom?

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Abstract Increasing latex hypersensitivity among patients and health care workers has prompted the development of latex-free surgical gloves. Latex-free gloves must perform equally as the existing latex standard. We analyzed perforation rates in a clinical trial comparing latex and a latex-free alternative during preliminary hip and knee arthroplasty. The overall latex glove perforation rate was 8.4% compared with 21.6% for the latex-free alternative (x^2 $P < .001$). The operation perforation rate for latex gloves was 34.4% compared with 80% for latex-free gloves (x^2 $P < .001$). We suggest that the latex-free glove tested cannot provide a reliable barrier between the surgeon and patient. As such, we question the safety of these gloves and the standards sets by the regulators.