SUMMARY OF:
ANAPHYLACTIC LATEX REACTION DURING ANESTHESIA: THE SILENT CULPRIT IN A FATAL CASE

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BACKGROUND

There are many different groups of individuals that are at risk for anaphylactic latex reactions during surgical and medical procedures. One of these groups is the gynecologic and obstetric population. Obstetrical and gynecological procedures account for approximately 50% of all latex reactions.

OVERVIEW

The authors investigated an undiagnosed latex allergy in a 33-year-old woman who had an anaphylactic latex reaction during her caesarean section. During a surgery the day after the caesarean section she had another anaphylactic latex reaction incident that caused cardiac arrest. There was no known latex allergy prior to her third caesarean section and her subsequent follow-up surgery. Her reported cause of death was Latex-induced fatal anaphylactic shock. The study looks at all factors which can be attributed to an undiagnosed latex allergy and factors that lead to the high risk of latex reactions in gynecological and obstetrical patients.

RESULTS

There are several factors that lead to gynecological and obstetric patients being at such a high risk for latex anaphylaxis. Women are naturally predisposed to NRL (Natural Rubber Latex) items at work and in everyday life. Another factor is the exposure of latex during vaginal examinations and vaginal deliveries through mucosal contact. Finally, the injection of oxytocin to increase uterine contractions could potentially cause the release of latex fragments from the uterus into the blood stream.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that clinicians look at several medical factors of their patients prior to gynecological and obstetric procedures. Patients that have had multiple surgical procedures, and patients that have a fruit allergy (i.e. chestnuts, figs, banana), are at higher risk for a latex allergy. Latex-induced anaphylactic shock is difficult to diagnose due to so many indicators that are identical to other clinical indications, and due to its delayed onset after the surgical procedure started.

This summary is written and provided by Ansell Healthcare Products LLC. Ansell Healthcare has attempted to summarize the published study as accurately as possible, but makes no representation to the accuracy of the summary. We refer the reader to the actual study for additional information.