Postoperative wound infections and surgical face masks: A controlled study

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Abstract

It has been suggested that surgical face masks have a protective effect against wound infections. However, the results of studies have been contradictory, and there is no consensus on whether surgical face masks are effective in preventing postoperative wound infections.

During a period of 115 weeks, 3,088 patients were included in the study. Weekly operations were performed with or without face masks. The incidence of wound infections was recorded for 1,537 operations performed with face masks and for 1,551 operations performed without face masks. The difference in the incidence of wound infections was not statistically significant (p > 0.05).

The results indicate that the use of surgical face masks may be reconsidered. The effectiveness of surgical face masks in preventing postoperative wound infections has not been proven statistically.

Results

It is possible that surgical face masks have a protective effect against wound infections. However, the results of studies have been contradictory, and there is no consensus on whether surgical face masks are effective in preventing postoperative wound infections.

During a period of 115 weeks, 3,088 patients were included in the study. Weekly operations were performed with or without face masks. The incidence of wound infections was recorded for 1,537 operations performed with face masks and for 1,551 operations performed without face masks. The difference in the incidence of wound infections was not statistically significant (p > 0.05). The bacterial species cultured from the wound infections did not differ significantly between the two groups.

Discussion

It has never been shown that the wearing of surgical face masks reduces the number of postoperative wound infections. On the contrary, it has been reported that the use of surgical face masks reduces the number of postoperative wound infections by 30% or more.

Conclusions

The use of surgical face masks in preventing postoperative wound infections has not been proven statistically. Therefore, the use of surgical face masks in preventing postoperative wound infections should be reconsidered.

References


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