Manufacturer's cleaning ineffective for suction tips

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To determine the efficacy of automated instrument reprocessing and identify a process that would produce a verifiably clean instrument after cleaning, Jahan Azizi, from the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor, and colleagues tested the manufacturer's recommended cleaning methods for surgical instruments. The authors tested suction tips, which are used in most surgical procedures, are exposed to high levels of organic debris, and are difficult to clean. A variety of processes and products were used to identify the best cleaning practices.

The researchers found that, after cleaning, debris was found in places where it should not be, and that the manufacturer's recommended cleaning methods were inadequate.

"As instruments become more complex, cleaning processes necessarily become more complex as well. Determining the best means of cleaning instruments is vital to ensuring patient safety," the authors write. "This project revealed that often the instruments are not thoroughly cleaned even though personnel follow manufacturer instructions, but the solution to this problem, as well as its significance, requires additional investigation."

More information: Abstract
Full Text (subscription or payment may be required)