

A reflection in times of pandemic: can the application of a tourniquet for blood collection still be considered a safe practice?

*Uma reflexão em tempos de pandemia: o uso do garrote para coleta de sangue
ainda pode ser considerado uma prática segura?*

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Dear editor,

The year is 2021, but some issues seem to remain in the 1980s when the topic involves patient safety. The continuous and irresponsible tourniquet application in patients at the time of blood collection for laboratory tests⁽¹⁾ puts us on high alert in times of pandemic.

Laboratory blood tests generate results that influence medical actions by up to 70%⁽²⁾. In this scenario, access to single-use disposables in a hospital environment has become a source of protection and defense of collective or personal health. Latex gloves for procedures, disposable syringes, and needles, a vacuum blood collection system, among others, are tools that directly contribute to public health.

However, unfortunately, some practices insist on spreading, going against all efforts already invested to reduce the spread of coronavirus disease (Covid-19). The successive use of a tourniquet –

a product responsible for blocking blood flow, mostly a band of rubber, which purpose is to facilitate the visualization and access to veins at the time of blood collection – in patients can be considered a potential source of Covid-19 spread⁽³⁾. The practice of reusing disposable products has already become a longstanding⁽⁴⁾, however, it seems to be far from the over.

The lack of knowledge of the risks involved in the continuous use of a tourniquet^(1,5) jeopardizes patient safety and, currently, can contribute to the dissemination of Covid-19. The inappropriate use of a tourniquet has already been studied worldwide⁽¹⁾, highlighting the need for emergency actions, especially nowadays.

It is undeniable that the pandemic has brought new learning to the scientific community; moreover, it showed that the multidisciplinary effort was and continues to be the key to open new horizons. We realized that simple attitudes, such as personal hygiene measures, can impact in a broader context. However, we must review some topics that are no longer so obscure; repeating old mistakes may take a learning opportunity away from them again.

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