

CDC Guideline Recommendation Questioned

To the Editor:

In the guidelines for the Prevention of Surgical Wound Infections published in the *Infection Control* special supplement of March/April 1982, there is the following statement on page 195: "Use of tacky or antiseptic mats at the entrance to the OR is not recommended for Infection Control. Category I."

Since we are using the "contamination control dry mat" (floor mat), prior to announcing to the OR Committee your new guidelines, I would like to learn the reasons for the above recommendation.

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The preceding letter was referred to the Centers for Disease Control for a reply.

Since the Guideline for Prevention of Surgical Wound Infections was published,¹ questions have been raised regarding the interpretation of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendation on adhesive mats ("tacky mats"). Our Category I recommendation, "Use of tacky or antiseptic mats at the entrance to the OR is not recommended for infection control," reflects the lack of any controlled study relating floor contamination directly to surgical wound infection rates or the introduction of these mats to a reduction in surgical wound infection rates.

Whether these mats have other benefits unrelated to infection control (eg, as an aid in housekeeping) that may justify their use was not addressed

in the guideline. The potential benefits and possible hazards associated with their use for other purposes have not been examined by CDC. Considerations other than those related to infection control may influence an individual hospital's decision regarding the use of adhesive mats.

REFERENCE

1. Simmons BP: Guideline for prevention of surgical wound infections. *Infect Control* 1982; 3:187-196.

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