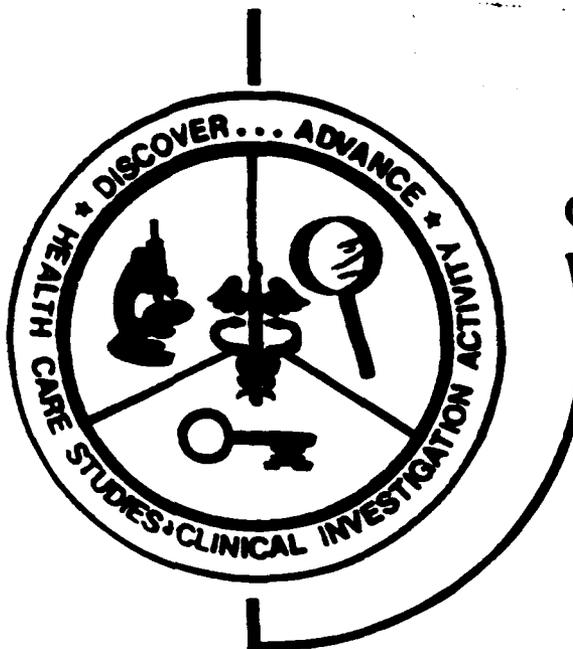


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**UNITED STATES ARMY
HEALTH CARE STUDIES AND
CLINICAL INVESTIGATION ACTIVITY**

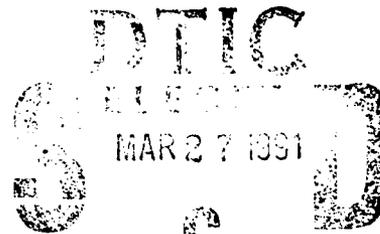
GLOVE USE IN ARMY DENTAL CLINICS:

A REPORT OF CONSULTATION

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UNITED STATES ARMY

HEALTH SERVICES COMMAND

FORT SAM HOUSTON, TEXAS 78234

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19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) The purpose of this report was to explore the usage and problems associated with gloves by the Army Dental Care System. Five groups were surveyed, including Army dentists, dental assistants, dental hygienists, and dental laboratory technicians worldwide. Data were collected from self administered questionnaires. Findings show 68 percent of population rated the quality of gloves available through the supply system as good or excellent, with only 6.2 percent rating them poor or unacceptable. Major complaints identified are inconsistent sizing and tearing.												
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Dental Studies Division
U.S. Army Health Care Studies and
Clinical Investigation Activity
Ft. Sam Houston, Texas

November 1990

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Chapter 1: Background

At the request of the Senior Dental Corps Staff Officer the Dental Studies Division of the Health Care Studies and Clinical Investigation Activity analyzed the results of a survey performed by MAJ Zoltan Berky and MAJ(P) W.P. Luciano, (Encl 1). The survey had the approval of the Fort Meade Dental Activity (DENTAC) Education Committee (Encl 2) and the Office of the Assistant Surgeon General for Dental Services (Encl 3).

Chapter 2: Methods

2.1 Study Design and Procedure

A self-administered questionnaire consisting of 18 multiple choice questions relating to the use of gloves was sent to DENTACs worldwide to be completed by dentists, hygienists, dental assistants, and dental laboratory technicians (Encl 4).

2.2 Data Analysis

2.2.1 Data Management

Completed questionnaires were consolidated at the DENTACs and mailed to Majors Berky and Luciano, who consolidated and forwarded them to the Health Care Studies and Clinical Investigations Activity (HCSCIA). Of 3,400 questionnaires sent to the DENTACs 2,465 questionnaires were returned, edited, entered, and analyzed by HCSCIA personnel using the Statistical Analysis System at the Fort Detrick Data Processing Center.

2.2.2 Analytic Strategy

The analysis focuses on describing reported glove use among dentists, dental assistants, preventive dentistry specialists, and dental laboratory technicians. Where appropriate, sub-analyses were performed for each duty group.

Chapter 3: Results

3.1 Analysis

3.1.1 Sample Size and Response Rate

The exact response rate cannot be determined because the number of people receiving questionnaires is unknown. An estimate of the response rate was made by determining the number of dentists, dental assistants, preventive dentistry specialists, and dental laboratory technicians assigned to DENTACs, worldwide. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the respondents by duty, as well as the estimated response rate. The category "dental laboratory technician" was constructed from write-in responses in the "other" block. The response rate presented in Table 1 is a lower-bound estimate in that it assumes that all (5,958) authorizations¹ were filled at the time the questionnaires were circulated, and that all the incumbents completed and returned them. Only 3,400 questionnaires were sent out. While some DENTACs may have made additional copies of the questionnaire, it is unlikely that enough were made for all potential respondents.

3.1.2 Interpretation of Results

The results are presented as numbers and percentages of respondents falling in each of the categories. In evaluating responses to questions about glove preferences it should be borne in mind that many respondents' familiarity with the range of brands is likely to be limited and that their responses will be based on a comparison among a few brands. The analysis will focus on those brands used by five percent or more of the respondents. Since not all respondents answered every question the response rates differ.

3.2 Daily Glove Use (Question 1)

Of the 2,465 respondents, 99 (4 percent) reported no glove use. Table 2 shows the distribution of glove use by duty. While the extent to which the respondents were involved with clinical care cannot be determined from the survey, it is likely that the majority of the 99 were in administrative positions; DENTAC commanders, public health hygienists, NCOICs or supply NCOs. The 18 dental laboratory technicians who reported no glove use are more difficult to explain since only a small proportion of laboratory technicians are totally supervisory or work with uncontaminated cases only.

¹Per AMEDD Personnel Proponency Office.

3.3 Distribution of Glove Sizes (Question 2)

Table 3 shows the distribution of glove sizes.

3.4 Frequently Worn Brands of Gloves (Question 3)

Table 4 shows the most frequently worn brands of gloves. Perry and Conform/Ansell represent over 50 percent of the reported glove use. Glove brands used by fewer than five respondents were combined into the "other" category.

3.5 Glove Preference (Questions 4 and 5)

Table 5 shows the preferred brands¹ of respondents indicating a preference. Perry and Conform/Ansell represent 59.3 percent of the preference. Table 6 shows the respondents' reasons for preferring brands of gloves. The major reasons are improved tactile sense, not too much powder, tear resistance, and less allergenic². Table 7 shows the preferred brand with the reason for preference. In general, tactile sense and less powder were the major reasons for preference. Table 8 shows the brands that respondents felt were unacceptable for routine patient treatment. Conform/Ansell was by far the least preferred glove despite the fact that it was not the most frequently used.

3.6 Fit (Questions 6 and 7)

Table 9 shows that Perry gloves were felt to have the most consistent fit while Table 10 shows that Conform/Ansell had the least accurate fit.

3.7 Types of Gloves Used (Question 8)

3.7.1 Vinyl Examination Gloves

Table 11 shows vinyl glove use by duty. Of the 682 (29.4%) respondents who reported using vinyl gloves 21.4 percent used them more than 50 percent of the time.

3.7.2 Latex Examination Gloves

Table 12 shows latex examination glove use by duty. Of the 997 (43%) respondents who used latex examination gloves 25.8 percent used them more than 50 percent of the time.

¹The question did not distinguish between latex and vinyl, or examination and surgical gloves.

²This is an impression and not necessarily based on medical confirmation.

3.7.3 Latex Surgical Gloves

Table 13 shows latex surgical glove use by duty. Of the 774 (44%) respondents who used latex surgical gloves 21.4 percent used them more than 50 percent of the time.

3.8 Glove Problems

3.8.1 Vinyl Examination Gloves (Question 9)

Table 14 shows that the major problem (45 percent) reported by vinyl glove users was improper labeling. A total of 401 (32.2 percent) of respondents' complaints related to tearing.

3.8.2 Latex Examination Gloves (Question 10)

Table 15 shows that over 50 percent of the respondents reported problems relating to tearing.

3.8.3 Latex Surgical Gloves (Question 11)

Table 16 shows that 59 percent of the problems reported by latex surgical glove users related to tearing.

3.9 Gloves Found Defective on Donning (Question 12)

3.9.1 Vinyl Examination Gloves

The proportion of vinyl gloves found defective on donning ranged from zero to 100 percent with a mode of zero percent and a median of 20 percent. Table 17 shows that Tru-Touch gloves were found defective on donning by many respondents.

3.9.2 Latex Examination Gloves

Latex examination gloves found defective on donning were reported by 40.8 percent of the respondents. The proportion of such gloves ranged from one to 100 percent with both median and mode of ten percent. Table 18 shows that Conform/Ansell gloves were found defective on donning by many respondents.

3.9.3 Latex Surgical Gloves

Latex surgical gloves found defective on donning were reported by 32.6 percent of the respondents. The proportion of such gloves ranged from one to 100 percent with both median and mode of ten percent. Table 19 shows the proportion of gloves respondents found defective on donning.

3.10 Perceived Quality of Gloves Available Through Supply System (Question 13)

Sixty-eight percent of respondents rated the gloves available to them as good or excellent. Only 6.2 percent rated their gloves poor or unacceptable. Table 20 shows perceived quality by duty.

3.11 Areas of Concern Relating to Glove Quality (Question 14)

Respondents' major concerns with the quality of gloves available through the supply system are related to inconsistent sizing. It is not possible to determine the extent to which this is due to variation between brands or within brands.

3.12 Standardization of Gloves (Question 15)

Table 21 shows that over 20 percent of all duty groups felt that standardization of glove size was a problem. The proportion did not vary substantially among duty groups.

3.13 Sources of Gloves (Questions 16 and 17)

Ninety eight percent of respondents obtained their gloves through the federal supply system.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Perceived Quality

In general, respondents liked the gloves they were using. There was a strong and significant association between the rank-order of most frequently worn (Table 4) and the most preferred brands (Table 5).¹ Among respondents who identified brands they didn't like, the least preferred brands were not necessarily those that were used by most respondents. The (non-parametric) correlation between the most frequently worn brands and those felt to be inferior (Table 8) was strong² and significant. The apparent inconsistency between these comparisons has at least two explanations. First, questions four through seven did not specify glove type. Consequently, it cannot be determined whether they are referring to latex or vinyl, surgical or examination gloves. Second, is the difference in the response rates for the three tables. The response rate for Table 8 was 868, less than half that of Tables 4 and 5.

4.2 Glove Problems

Tearing on donning is the major problem reported for latex examination and surgical gloves. This is reported over the entire spectrum of brands to varying degrees. This suggests an industry-wide lapse in quality control or, perhaps, improper user donning technique. The extent to which either factor is responsible cannot be determined by this survey.

The high reported prevalence of quality-related problems is not consistent with the lack of reported Type 2 material complaints received by the Defense Medical Standardization Board (DMSB).³ This lack of complaints is most likely due to the fact the existence of the DMSB is not well known at the user level.

¹Only two of the ten rankings were different. Spearman rank correlation coefficient .828, $p < .05$ (one-tailed). See Siegel, Nonparametric Statistics, pp. 202-212.

²Spearman rank correlation coefficient = .75, $p < .05$ (one tailed).

³Per telephone conversation with COL David Brunner, Deputy Staff Director, 31 Oct 90.

5.0 Conclusion

All personnel using gloves should be made aware of the procedure for reporting medical material complaints.

Proper donning technique should be emphasized in dental assistant and preventive dentistry specialist training as well as at in-service training at the DENTACs for all personnel using gloves.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Self-administered questionnaires relating to glove use were sent to Army dentists, dental assistants, dental hygienists, and dental laboratory technicians, worldwide. Of the 2,465 respondents, four percent reported no glove use, 29.4 percent used vinyl gloves, 43 percent used latex examination gloves, and 44 percent used latex surgical gloves.

Overall, 68 percent rated the quality of the gloves available through the supply system as good or excellent, with only 6.2 percent rating them poor or unacceptable.

The major complaints about vinyl gloves were inconsistent sizing and tearing. The major complaint about latex examination and surgical gloves was tearing, especially on donning. The principal reason one brand was favored over another was tactile sense. Overall, the major concern about glove quality was inconsistent sizing.

While users are, for the most part, satisfied with the gloves they are using, those with complaints have not filed Type 2 Material Complaints. Users should be educated as to how to file such complaints. The large proportion of respondents complaining about tearing on donning suggests a technique problem on the part of the users.

Appendix A
Survey Instrument, Documents, Tables

Table 1

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY DUTY TYPE
(N = 2,465)

DUTY TYPE	SAMPLE	PERCENT OF RESPONSES	POP. ¹	RESPONSES RATE ²
DENTAL ASSISTANT	907	36.8	3,330	27.2
DENTIST	862	35.0	1,519	56.7
HYGIENIST	194	7.9	188	103.2 ³
PREV. DENT. SPEC. (X2)	193	7.8	319	62.5
LAB TECH	162	6.6	602	26.9
NO RESPONSE	147	6.0	---	---

¹Military and civilian dentist, dental assistant, dental hygienist, and dental laboratory technician authorizations at DENTACs, worldwide.

²Based on the population estimate.

³The number of hygienist authorizations may understate the total number of hygienists to the extent that hygienists are hired against other positions. Also, it is possible that some preventive dentistry specialists may have identified themselves as hygienists and that some hygienists did not record their duty type (Question 18). They would be reflected in the "no response" category.

Table 2

DAILY GLOVE USE BY DUTY TYPE
(N = 2,237)

DUTY TYPE	N	MEAN	STD. DEV.
DENTAL ASSISTANT	907	13.04	10.29
DENTIST	862	14.58	8.81
HYGIENIST	194	10.10	5.02
PREV. DENT. SPEC. (X2)	193	13.20	6.86
LAB TECH	162	14.63	16.58

Table 3

DISTRIBUTION OF GLOVE SIZES
(N = 2,346)

SIZE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
5 1/2	22	0.9
6	189	8.1
6 1/2	550	23.4
7	501	21.4
7 1/2	729	31.1
8	229	9.8
8 1/2	107	4.6
9 AND LARGER	19	0.8

Table 4
 MOST FREQUENTLY WORN GLOVES
 (N = 1,967)

BRAND	MOST OFTEN USED		NEXT MOST OFTEN USED	
	FREQUENCY	PERCENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
PERRY	840	42.7	368	18.7
CONFORM/ ANSELL	398	20.2	312	15.7
TRAVENOL	150	7.6	149	7.6
PROLAX	86	4.4	114	5.8
STERLING	64	3.3	99	5.0
TRU-TOUCH	117	6.0	94	4.8
SMITH-NEPHEW	28	1.4	35	1.8
MILLER	5	0.3	6	0.3
SURGIKOS	0	0	10	0.5
OTHERS	279	14.2	303	15.4

Table 5
 PREFERRED GLOVES
 (N = 1,837)

BRAND	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
PERRY	850	46.2
CONFORM/ ANSELL	241	13.1
TRAVENOL	200	10.9
PROLAX	78	4.2
STERLING	72	3.9
TRU-TOUCH	67	3.7
SMITH-NEPHEW	23	1.3
MILLER	2	0.1
SURGIKOS	7	0.4
OTHERS	297	16.2

Table 6
 REASONS FOR PREFERENCE
 (N = 1,673)

REASON	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
IMPROVED TACTILE SENSE	888	53.1
NOT TOO MUCH POWDER	256	15.3
DOES NOT TEAR READILY	68	4.1
NOT ALLERGENIC	87	5.2
OPERATING ROOM USE	2	0.1
CHEAPER	18	1.1
DISPENSER BOX	9	0.5
OTHER	345	20.6

Table 7

GLOVE PREFERENCE BY REASON
(N = 946)

BRAND	TACTILE SENSE	LESS POWDER	DOESN'T TEAR	NOT ALLERGENIC
PERRY	385	77	34	23
CONFORM/ ANSELL	106	19	6	7
TRAVENOL	90	23	2	15
PROLAX	32	10	2	5
STERLING	33	8	5	2
TRU-TOUCH	22	19	0	4
SMITH-NEPHEW	9	2	2	0
MILLER	0	1	0	0
SURGIKOS	2	1	0	0

Table 8
 LEAST PREFERRED GLOVES
 (N = 868)

BRAND	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
PERRY	85	9.7
CONFORM/ ANSELL	321	37.0
TRAVENOL	44	5.1
PROLAX	61	7.0
STERLING	30	3.5
TRU-TOUCH	151	17.4
SMITH-NEPHEW	5	0.6
SURGIKOS	6	0.7
OTHERS	165	19.0

Table 9

MOST CONSISTENT FIT
(N = 1,854)

BRAND	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
PERRY	927	50.0
CONFORM/ ANSELL	218	11.8
TRAVENOL	204	11.0
PROLAX	82	4.4
STERLING	64	3.5
TRU-TOUCH	53	2.8
SMITH-NEPHEW	28	1.5
MILLER	5	0.3
SURGIKOS	5	0.3
OTHERS	268	14.5

Table 10
 LEAST ACCURATE FIT
 (N = 1,100)

BRAND	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
PERRY	130	11.8
CONFORM/ ANSELL	313	28.5
TRAVENOL	66	6.0
PROLAX	80	7.2
STERLING	48	4.4
TRU-TOUCH	250	22.7
SMITH-NEPHEW	8	0.7
MILLER	1	0.1
SURGIKOS	6	0.6
OTHERS	198	18.0

Table 11
 VINYL EXAMINATION GLOVE USE BY DUTY
 (N = 2,318)

PERCENT USE	DENTIST	HYGIENIST	DUTY PREV DENT SPEC	LAB TECH	DENTAL ASST
0	602	153	142	127	612
1 - 25	171	21	25	17	128
26 - 50	44	9	15	9	78
51 - 75	9	5	1	0	22
76 - 100	36	6	10	9	67

Table 12

LATEX EXAMINATION GLOVE USE BY DUTY
(N = 2,318)

PERCENT USE	DUTY				
	DENTIST	HYGIENIST	PREVENTIVE DENT SPEC	LAB TECH	DENTAL ASST
0	424	130	121	108	538
1 - 25	388	41	52	35	248
26 - 50	32	15	11	9	76
51 - 75	3	2	2	2	15
76 - 100	15	6	7	8	30

Table 13
 LATEX SURGICAL GLOVE USE BY DUTY
 (N = 2.318)

PERCENT USE	DUTY				
	DENTIST	HYGIENIST	PREVENTIVE DENT SPEC	LAB TECH	DENTAL ASST
0	534	116	147	136	611
1 - 25	304	66	36	21	216
26 - 50	9	8	5	3	44
51 - 75	5	0	0	0	11
76 - 100	10	4	5	2	25

Table 14

VINYL EXAMINATION GLOVE PROBLEMS
(N = 1,244)

PROBLEM	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
IMPROPER LABELING	560	45.0
TEAR ON DONNING	323	26.0
INCONSISTENT SIZING	199	16.0
TEARS ARE EVIDENT	40	3.2
TEARS EASILY ON USE	38	3.1
OTHER REASON	84	6.8

Table 15

LATEX EXAMINATION GLOVE PROBLEMS
(N = 1,294)

PROBLEM	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
IMPROPER LABELING	278	21.5
TEAR ON DONNING	502	38.8
INCONSISTENT SIZING	173	13.4
TEARS ARE EVIDENT	112	8.7
TEARS EASILY ON USE	57	4.4
OTHER REASON	172	13.3

Table 16

LATEX SURGICAL GLOVE PROBLEMS
(N = 890)

PROBLEM	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
IMPROPER LABELING	117	13.1
TEAR ON DONNING	400	44.9
INCONSISTENT SIZING	105	11.8
TEARS ARE EVIDENT	71	8.0
TEARS EASILY ON USE	56	6.3
OTHER REASON	141	15.8

Table 17
 PERCENT VINYL EXAMINATION GLOVES FOUND
 DEFECTIVE ON DONNING
 (N = 321)

BRAND	PERCENT				
	0	1 - 25	26-50	56-75	76-100
PERRY	3	7	2	0	3
CONFORM/ ANSELL	3	20	2	0	2
TRAVENOL	1	13	9	1	5
TRU-TOUCH	19	116	55	11	48
MILLER	1	0	0	0	0

Table 18
 PERCENT LATEX EXAMINATION GLOVES FOUND
 DEFECTIVE ON DONNING
 (N = 604)

BRAND	PERCENT				
	0	1 - 25	26-50	56-75	76-100
PERRY	4	63	9	2	4
CONFORM/ ANSELL	27	358	62	10	36
TRAVENOL	0	8	0	1	0
PROLAX	0	4	0	0	0
STERLING	0	6	2	0	0
TRU-TOUCH	1	1	2	1	0
SMITH-NEPHEW	0	3	0	0	0

Table 19

PERCENT LATEX SURGICAL GLOVES FOUND
DEFECTIVE ON DONNING
(N = 549)

BRAND	PERCENT				
	0	1 - 25	26-50	56-75	76-100
PERRY	67	255	22	4	16
CONFORM/ ANSELL	3	13	4	0	1
TRAVENOL	7	42	5	0	7
PROLAX	9	49	4	1	1
STERLING	4	16	3	1	1
SMITH-NEPHEW	1	10	0	0	1
MILLER	1	1	0	0	0

Table 20

CONCERNS ABOUT GLOVE QUALITY BY DUTY
(N = 2,223)

	DUTY				
	DENTIST	HYGIENIST	PREVENTIVE DENT SPEC	LAB TECH	DENTAL ASST
IMPROPER LABELING	141	31	16	12	70
INCONSISTENT SIZE	500	111	93	77	461
TEAR ON DONNING	159	37	55	46	280
TEARS EVIDENT	37	9	16	12	57
TEARS EASILY	1	0	0	0	2

Table 21

IS STANDARDIZATION OF GLOVE SIZE A PROBLEM?
 BY DUTY (N = 543)

DUTY	NUMBER REPORTING PROBLEMS	TOTAL NUMBER IN SAMPLE	% OF TOTAL NUMBER IN SAMPLE
DENTIST	189	862	21.9
HYGIENIST	41	194	21.1
PREVENTIVE DENT SPEC	57	193	29.5
LAB TECH	34	162	21.0
DENTAL ASST	222	907	24.5