

Reusable ultrasound probe covers

Sir,

The use of ultrasound has increased enormously for anesthetic practices in the perioperative period and intensive care units (ICU). All interventions, irrespective of where they are performed, carry the risk of infective complications. Therefore, infection control practices and disinfection of the equipments is the need of the hour to minimize the risk of hospital acquired infection. Targeted disinfection of environmental surfaces (those frequently touched) is an established component of infection control activities to prevent the spread of nosocomial (multi-resistant) pathogens.^[1]

Most of the operation theaters or ICU in the developing countries is usually equipped with a single ultrasound machine that needs to be transferred wherever the procedure is to be performed. The machine may thus alternate between sterile and a nonsterile environment and is therefore liable to come in contact with the patient at the time of performing the interventions. Hence, strict compliance to sterility needs to be maintained, and the ultrasound probes and the cords must be shielded to form a barrier for prevention of infection.

Majority of commercially available sterile probe covers are made up of rubber or plastic [Figure 1].^[2] In their absence, sterile gloves and boot covers has been used as an alternative.^[3,4]

We have been using cloth cover tailor made for the cord of the machine instead of the camera drape or other commercial shield [Figure 2]. The cover is made from the material available in the hospital and can be easily washed, autoclaved and stored for use. These are reusable and cost-effective as compared with dedicated sheath barriers. The footprint of the probe is covered with commercially available adhesive dressing, tegaderm or glove with jelly to maintain asepsis with both the probe covers and this is a standard protocol at our institution.

It is a novel, effective and inexpensive method in providing a barrier to infection and maintaining asepsis



Figure 1: Commercially available probe cover

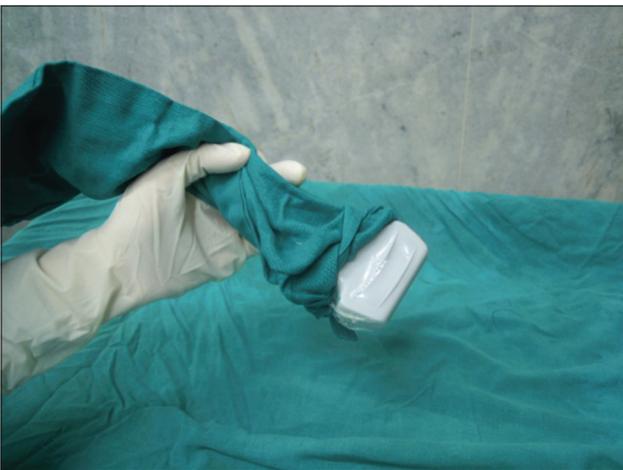


Figure 2: Reusable probe cover

without additional financial burden on the patient. We recommend the use of the same in the other institutions for the cost containment while undertaking procedural interventions.

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