

# Deleterious effects of reprocessing guide wires: an alert

*Efeitos deletérios do reprocessamento de fios-guia: um alerta*

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Gelamo et al., on page 331 of this issue, present the elegant work entitled “Effects of reprocessing on chemical and morphological properties of guide wires used in angioplasty” [1], in which they describe significant morphological changes after washing the guide wires once or twice using ultrasonic vibration and enzymatic detergent, and no significant changes when sterilized with ethylene oxide.

This paper becomes even more relevant at a time when health authorities have been severely restricting the reuse of medical and hospital equipment, since it differentiates reprocessing techniques which can cause visible alterations after their first application.

The study is limited to structural changes and it gives no details on possible clinical repercussions. This aspect would be of great practical interest as coronary angioplasty is one of the most commonly performed invasive procedures in the world and the discussion about the cost-effectiveness of reusing equipment is still undefined.

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In 2006, this journal published an article by Batista et al. [2], in which the authors presented the follow-up of 60 patients that had undergone coronary angioplasty. During the

procedures, seven different types of devices were used, guide wires being one of them, totaling 76 new and 410 reprocessed. There were no differences in adverse events as a result of using either new or reprocessed equipment.

These are new times, with equipment made up of new components and different processing techniques, and there lies the need for attention.

The alert is welcome and the authors must be commended for focusing on a topic of great socioeconomic interest, which should be a cause for concern to both hemodynamics and healthcare management professionals, in general.

## REFERENCES

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