

No evidence to support the effectiveness of surgical masks compared to respirators in reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection when providing non-aerosol generating care to COVID-19 patients – A systematic review

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Abstract

We systematically assessed the evidence comparing surgical facemasks to respirators in the prevention of COVID-19 in HCW providing non AGP care in a hospital setting. We identified only one relevant study which reported no significant difference in COVID-19 infection rates amongst HCWs wearing surgical facemasks or FFP1 face-covers as compared to FFP2 respirators. This was an observational study with substantial methodological deficiencies and highlights the need for high quality evidence. However, until this evidence is available, and given that inadequate mask use may increase the risk of nosocomial infection amongst patients and HCWs, we would recommend respirators for non-AGP care.

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