



Should sanitation tents be used for prevention of COVID-19 transmission?

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KEY FINDINGS

There is currently no evidence to support the use of sanitation tents in the prevention of COVID-19 transmission

- Sanitation tents or disinfection tents have been installed in various areas of the Philippines as a measure to decontaminate individuals and prevent COVID-19 transmission
- The commonly used disinfectant in these tents is diluted household bleach. Others propose to use alcohol or diluted povidone iodine to decontaminate individuals in the tent.
- Bleach is an irritant to mucous membranes and loses its antimicrobial effect over time or when exposed to heat, sunlight.
- Alcohol is flammable and also causes irritation to mucous membranes.
- Povidone iodine may cause skin irritation, chemical pneumonitis when inhaled, and acute kidney injury when systemically absorbed.
- There are no completed or ongoing studies on the use of sanitation tents for the prevention of COVID-19 transmission.
- To date, there are no guidelines that mention sanitation tents as an option for COVID-19 decontamination.
- The World Health Organization explicitly recommends against spraying alcohol or chlorine all over a person's body due to adverse health effects and the lack of inhibitory activity against viruses that have already entered the body.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that most environmental protection agency-registered household disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. However, these products are approved for use only on surfaces and not on humans.
- The Department of Health guidelines recommend the avoidance of spraying or misting for COVID-19 due to lack of evidence of its efficacy.

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RESULTS

There are no completed or ongoing studies on the use of sanitation tents for the prevention of COVID-19 transmission.

A 2011 systematic review that evaluated physical interventions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses reported hand hygiene was the intervention supported by the highest quality of evidence. Use of surgical masks or N95 respirators were also consistently found to be effective. The evidence supporting the addition of virucidals or antiseptics to regular hand hygiene (i.e. using soap and water) to decrease transmission of respiratory viruses was reported to be uncertain. The review included 3 randomized controlled trials and 3 prospective cohort studies on antiseptic use, and 3 randomized controlled trials and 1 prospective cohort study on use of virucidal tissues. Results of these studies were conflicting. Meta-analysis was not done for this intervention [14].

Recommendations from Other Guidelines

- To date, there are no guidelines that mention sanitation tents as an option for COVID-19 decontamination.
- The World Health Organization explicitly recommends against spraying alcohol or chlorine all over a person's body due to adverse health effects and the lack of inhibitory activity against viruses that have already entered the body [15].
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that most environmental protection agency-registered household disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. However, these products are approved for use only on surfaces and not on humans [16].
- The Department of Health (DOH) guidelines recommend the avoidance of spraying or misting for COVID-19 due to lack of evidence of its efficacy. The DOH also stated that spraying may cause additional health and safety concerns such as dispersing pathogens further, skin irritation and inhalation of chemicals, and environmental pollution. At present, guidelines from the DOH allow the use of the existing disinfection tents only for spraying or misting individuals in full personal protective equipment (PPE), characterized as having no external skin exposure, before doffing their full PPEs.[17-18]

CONCLUSION

- At present, there are no studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of sanitation tents in the prevention of COVID-19 transmission.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest

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