

Bacterial contamination of anaesthetists' hands by personal mobile phone and fixed phone use in the operating theatre

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Following hand disinfection, 40 anaesthetists working in the operating room (OR) were asked to use their personal in-hospital mobile phone for a short phone call. After use of the cell phone, bacterial contamination of the physicians' hands was found in 38/40 physicians (4/40 with human pathogen bacteria). After repeating the same investigation with fixed phones in the OR anteroom 33/40 physicians showed bacterial contamination (4/40 with human pathogen bacteria). The benefit of using mobile phones in the OR should be weighed against the risk for unperceived contamination. The use of mobile phones may have more serious hygiene consequences, because, unlike fixed phones, mobile phones are often used in the OR close to the patient.