

# Report warns of recycled glove use in Kenyan hospital

## Abstract:

PIP: Kibwage et al. initiated a study into the microbial and physical quality of recycled gloves at Kenyatta National Hospital after a laboratory assistant wearing recycled gloves acquired HIV infection while taking a blood sample from a patient. The worker died of AIDS in 1988.

Kibwage et al.'s findings were recently published in an article in the East African Medical Journal. The researchers reported that Kenya government hospitals autoclave used plastic gloves when there is a shortage and autoclave new plastic gloves not meant for surgical use for that purpose. Boiling the gloves in the autoclave at 125 degrees Celsius causes the gloves to stick to each other. Separating them causes tiny tears and holes through which microorganisms can pass. 41% of the recycled gloves used at Kenyatta National Hospital are unsanitary and can transmit disease. The hospital uses about 20,000 gloves each week. Recycled gloves cost about one cent US each, compared to three US cents each for presterilized gloves. Hospital officials dispute the report's claims and counter that the gloves referred to in the study were plastic ones used exclusively for examination. Kibwage et al. recommend using gamma radiation and ethylene oxide to sterilize gloves, surgical attire, and instruments