

NEW HORIZONS — ALLERGY —

IgE antibody determination with ImmunoCAP™ Chlorhexidine

Join us exploring the frontiers of allergy research

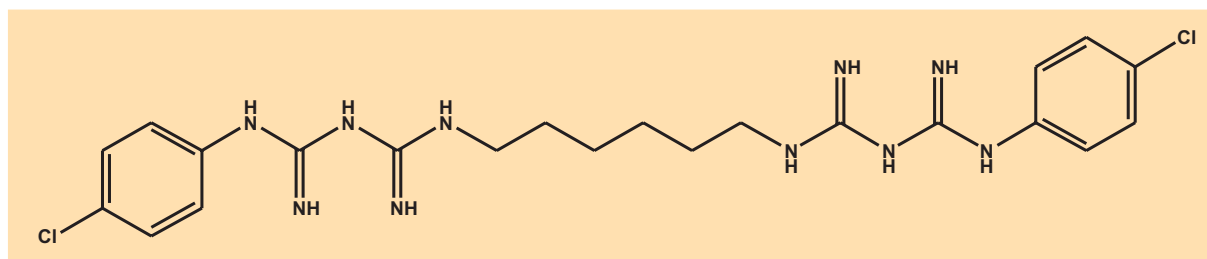
Clinical background

In many countries, the disinfectant chlorhexidine is widely used both in healthcare and in the home, and exposure to it is almost inevitable. It has few side effects when used on skin or mucous membranes in low concentration. However, hypersensitivity reactions to chlorhexidine have been reported from around the world since the mid-1960s. These reactions range from mild skin reactions to profound anaphylactic shock with cardiac arrest. For the past seven years in Denmark, there has been a special focus on anaphylaxis to chlorhexidine in connection with anaesthesia. Testing with chlorhexidine has been part of the standard investigation programme at the Danish Anaesthesia Allergy Centre (DAAC) when investigating patients suspected of suffering anaphylactic reactions during anaesthesia. A relatively large number of patients investigated at the DAAC have tested positive to chlorhexidine in skin testing, and most of them have been shown to have IgE antibodies to chlorhexidine (ImmunoCAP™, Phadia AB, Sweden).

Several clinical features of the reactions of patients with chlorhexidine allergy have been found to be similar to those of latex allergy. For example, both substances are used extensively during surgery and anaesthesia, reactions occur 20 to 40 minutes after exposure, and latex and chlorhexidine are rarely suspected when anaphylaxis does occur.

Despite the wide application of chlorhexidine as a skin disinfectant for healthcare workers, it has not been proven to cause sensitisation in this population.

Allergy to chlorhexidine has been shown to be IgE-mediated and diagnosis is made on the basis of a combination of clinical history, skin testing and measurement of IgE antibodies to chlorhexidine. Future challenges in this field will be to further refine the diagnostic tests, to carry out studies on the mode of sensitisation, and to try to define high-risk populations in an attempt to prevent these rare but serious reactions.



Chlorhexidine

Reference: *New Horizons* Number 2, 2006

Product List

ImmunoCAP™ for IgE antibody determination to chlorhexidine

Product	Code	Size	Art. No.
Chlorhexidine	c8	10	14-4926-01

Phadia

Phadia AB, P O Box 6460, SE-751 37 Uppsala, Sweden
Tel +46 18 16 50 00. www.phadia.com