negative history and positive prick-test, a use test was performed and
positive in one case showing that, at least in this case, the prick test
was not a false positive.1 These results were obtained with the use of a
colloidal suspension or preverulcanized rubber particles. Sensitivity
may not be as good with prick tests through latex gloves, and the
residual allergenicity of latex may even depend on different brands
of gloves.2 The high sensitivity of prick tests to latex is based on the
nature of allergens, which are natural proteins, as is the case for in-
halants or food allergens.

Using prick tests to latex, we have started prospectively testing chil-
dren with spina bifida. In the first eight children tested without any
history of allergy to latex, prick tests were positive in four and con-

"To the Editor:—The preoperative anesthesia visit has been shown to be as important as any premedication in allaying anxiety.1,2 However, it is not uncommon to overhear entomologic references such as, "Here's a little bee sting" (little) or "Here comes a Texas mosquito bite" (Texas) preceding local anesthetic infiltration. Such comments may reverse the rapport you have tried to establish. Why bring bugs into our work place?

Fear of insects is widespread. Who can forget the many horror movies starring giant bugs or swarming insects? Warnings abound of killer bees migrating to the United States. Approximately 1 in 100 persons is sensitized to Hymenoptera (bees, wasps, and hornets) venom, and the other 99 all know you can die from a bee sting. There are at least 40 deaths per year in the United States from Hymenoptera stings and serious nonfatal reactions in 1-10 persons per 100,000 per yr. In one study, 4,992 Boy Scouts were surveyed for previous stings; an incidence of systemic reactions of 0.4% was found.

Mosquitoes raise thoughts of uncleanliness and malaria and equine
encephalitis and have been investigated (though rejected) as a vector
for HIV transmission.9 Moreover, do mosquito bites sting and burn like
local anesthesia? That may confuse your patient and decrease trust.

Let us simply state, "I am going to numb this area with some local
anesthesia now. It may hurt for a moment." For small areas, such as
for intravenous placement, multiple-dose solutions such as saline may
be used and do not cause pain on injection.

The anxiety associated with insect bites may be greater than the
benefit of such analogies.

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