

Effects of radiation sterilization on the properties of nonwoven medical devices

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Abstract

Currently, there is a tendency for a significant increase in production and expansion of areas of application of nonwoven materials (NM), which are used in almost all areas of human life. Such properties of NMs as hydrophilicity or hydrophobicity, air permeability, good barrier and strength indicators at a relative low cost allow them to be effectively used for medical purposes. Nonwovens for medical use (NMMN) are considered. The most important stage in the final processing of medical devices made of NM is radiation sterilization. The influence of the absorbed dose and the type of ionizing radiation on the properties of NMMN of various designs: obtained by spunlace technology, by spunbond-meltblown-spunbond technology, and laminated nonwoven material has been studied. As a result of the conducted research, it was recommended: to sterilize NM with an electron beam, to control the consumer properties of medical devices from NM to check the quality of products after sterilization by assessing the change in the strength index with elongation, additionally to assess for laminated NM – water resistance, spunlace – absorption. In the production of nonwoven materials, various polymers are used, which have correspondingly different resistance to radiation sterilization. Some materials, for example, based on polypropylene, degrade when exposed to radiation, and the level of technical characteristics of the material is significantly reduced. It is also possible for autoxidative reactions initiated by radiation to occur in polymers, which can continue for a long time after irradiation of articles. To use these materials in radiation sterilized medical devices, it is necessary to have an understanding of the effect of ionizing radiation in a wide range of sterilizing doses on the materials used in these devices.

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