

New Technology Kills Bacteria That Cause Hospital Infections

Study results presented at World Health Organization conference on infection prevention

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NEW YORK, July 1, 2011 -- Early results from a comprehensive multi-site clinical trial demonstrated that the use of antimicrobial copper surfaces in intensive care unit rooms resulted in a 97 percent reduction of bacteria that cause hospital acquired infections. This particular study also found a 40 percent reduction in the risk of acquiring an infection. Study results are to be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for review and approval.

Initial study results were presented at the World Health Organization's 1st International Conference on Prevention and Infection Control (ICPIC) in Geneva, Switzerland on July 1, 2011.

The study, funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, was designed to determine the efficacy of antimicrobial copper in reducing the level of pathogens in hospital rooms, and whether such a reduction would translate into a lower risk of infection.

Researchers at the three hospitals involved in the trial, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, the Medical University of South Carolina, and the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, both in Charleston, replaced commonly touched items, such as bed rails, overbed tray tables, nurse call buttons and IV poles, with antimicrobial copper versions.

The reduction rate demonstrated on antimicrobial copper surfaces is the same as that achieved by "terminal" cleaning, the regimen conducted after each patient vacates a room.

Dr. Michael Schmidt, Professor and Vice Chairman of Microbiology and Immunology at MUSC, who presented the results at ICPIC, said, "Bacteria present on ICU room surfaces are probably responsible for up to 80 percent of patient infections, demonstrating how critical it is to keep hospitals clean. The copper objects used in the clinical trial lowered microbial levels and supplemented cleaning protocols."

Hospital patients have a 1:20 chance of developing an infection, and those who do have a 1:20 chance of dying as a result. The CDC estimates that in the U.S., hospital acquired infections kill 100,000 people and cost \$45 billion annually.

Independent laboratory testing has demonstrated that when cleaned regularly, antimicrobial copper products kill greater than 99.9% of the following bacteria within two hours of exposure: MRSA, VRE, Staphylococcus aureus, Enterobacter aerogenes, Pseudomonas aeruginosa, and E. coli O157:H7. For a complete listing of approved EPA public health claims for antimicrobial copper, please visit www.antimicrobialcopper.com. Clinical trial results are preliminary and under review; claims related to clinical trials have not been approved or reviewed by the U.S. EPA. Because many factors contribute to the risk of infection, individual results may vary.

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