

# Simple, rapid and cost-effective...

...screening for contamination...

**C**leaning is a cornerstone of infection control, yet it is frequently taken for granted and viewed as a burdensome cost. There are many factors affecting the control of infection – and cleaning is a fundamental component. Data shows a cost benefit (>£56,000 per ward per annum) of effective cleaning services. The cost of failure is not only measured as human suffering and additional medical costs, but trusts can also face severe penalties that can run into millions. Therefore, effective removal of contamination makes good clinical and economic sense.

The NHS cleaning manual defines cleaning as: 'A process which physically removes contamination but does not necessarily destroy micro-organisms'; and 'Cleaning removes micro-organisms and the organic material on which they thrive.'

The National Institute of Health Research recognises that the 'NHS places greater reliance on visual assessment of surface cleanliness. However, reliance on observational evidence in judging cleaning efficacy is subjective...microbiological tests tell us nothing about product residues left on surfaces that can support the survival and growth of microbes.' The ideal test for cleaning efficiency would be one that tests for the organic matter, gives rapid results, and is simple to perform on the ward. The ATP bioluminescence detects invisible contamination instantly and tells us if a surface has been cleaned.

The SystemSURE Plus ATP detection system (Hygiena International) is being used in many areas of hospitals for several applications, including as a post-cleaning verification and monitoring tool, and as a training and awareness tool for hand hygiene. It is simple and easy to use by



The SystemSURE Plus and the swab device it uses called Ultrasnap

non-technical staff anywhere. Most importantly, it provides an objective yardstick to yield quantitative numerical data about cleaning levels attained. For the first time, we have the data to enable managers to monitor the delivery of cleaning services, ensure consistency and quality of service, and, thus, value for money.

At the North Tees and Hartlepool Trust, SystemSURE Plus has been deployed extensively over the past two years and staff have commented as follows:

*"The ATP monitor provides immediate feedback on the efficiency of our cleaning and allows us to provide the best possible cleaning service. It ensures that surfaces are as clean and germ free as possible."*

*"The devices, carried by domestic supervisors, are used to check areas patients and staff come into contact with that may otherwise be overlooked."*

*"We use it to check areas such as under tables where a patient may hold it to pull it towards them. If we find an area on a particular ward*

*where there are high readings then we use the information to check similar areas on other wards. It helps us to find areas that might cause cross contamination and we can deal with them immediately.*

*"The device can also be used to help test the effectiveness of hand washing. Doctors will sometimes ask us to check their hands to see if they are washing effectively. As well as promoting good hand washing techniques gives a good example to other staff and patients."*

Effective cleaning requires clear leadership, attention to detail, clearly defined responsibilities and instructions, and sufficient resources. An objective assessment of quality standards is essential to measure attainment levels, monitor trends and set improvement targets. Modern technology (such as SystemSURE Plus) provides an effective tool for the management of cleaning services and creates significant savings.



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