

New Study Shows Higher Rates of *C. difficile* Infection in Hospitals that Use Reusable Sharps Containers



Results from independent analysis of survey of more than 600 hospitals presented at the 42nd Annual APIC Conference.

The study analyzed data from the results of a national survey of hospitals in the U.S. conducted in December 2013, with survey responses linked to the FY2012 Medicare Provider Analysis and Review (MedPAR) data set1. According to the analysis, hospitals that used single-use containers had significantly lower rates of *C. diff* as compared to those using reusable containers, with an Incidence Rate Ratio (IRR)=0.8701 (which translates to nearly a 15 percent difference in the prevalence of *C. diff* infection rates).

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U.S. infection-related deaths preventable over five years: CDC

A report from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said that various nursing homes and hospitals in the US try hard to control transmitting of risky infections but they lack coordination among themselves and rarely report to each other if a patient with an antibiotic-resistant bacteria is being transferred from one institution to another.



The infections, such as MRSA and *Clostridium difficile*, known as *C. diff*, essentially hop rides with patients, even those who are not showing any symptoms, as they move between hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities, according to separate studies conducted by researchers at UC Irvine, Johns Hopkins University and the University of Utah. In the United States, two million superbug-related illnesses crop up every year and at least 23,000 related deaths are on record, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. With better coordination, potentially deadly infections could be reduced by 70 percent and 37,000 lives saved over five years, the CDC says.

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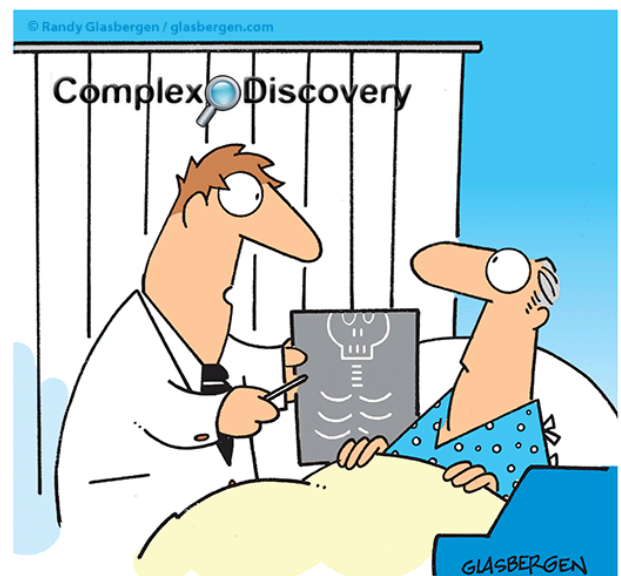
Just how efficacious are the cleaning and disinfection interventions performed in healthcare institutions?



And what standard are hospitals using to evaluate cleaning efforts? While it has been suggested that the food industry cleanliness standard (surface bioburden level of <math><2.5\text{ cfu/cm}^2</math>) be adopted in healthcare as an indication of relative cleanliness, there is still a lack of conclusive evidence that these levels of contamination relate to the prevention of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs).

A historical review to place this topic in perspective is in order here. As Dancer (2004) observed, “There may be a link between dirty hospitals and the rising numbers of hospital-acquired infections but there is little evidence to be able to substantiate this at present ... Unfortunately, the mechanisms for evaluating the quality of hospital cleaning regimens are limited.”

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“Your X-ray showed a broken rib, but we fixed it with Photoshop.”

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