

Polywipes

**Befeuchtete Schwämme
(Kratzschwamm) zur
Überprüfung der
Krankenhaus- bzw.
Betriebshygiene**



Evidence Based Infection Control

Products from Medical Wire

The global battle to bear down on healthcare acquired infections has many fronts, and increasing attention is being paid to the role of the near patient environment as a reservoir or vector in the transmission of the responsible pathogens. Stringent cleaning policies have been in place for a number of years, but there is a need to monitor the effectiveness of such activities. Bacteria in particular, can hide within biofilms that may not always be completely removed by cleaning, and can then recover and become a source of infection.

Simple sampling of previously cleaned surfaces can give misleading results. Bacteria may well still be present on the surface, protected within a biofilm. But during sampling, traces of disinfectant may be also be picked up with the sample, and kill any bacteria in the sample. Effective sampling will require a means of neutralising trace disinfectants or antibacterial reagents to allow survival of microorganisms so that they remain available for culture and analysis. Premoistened sponge swabs do this by immediately diluting the disinfectant to sub-lethal concentrations, while neutralising rinse swabs are premoistened with a solution of neutralising agents which will inactivate any trace disinfectant.

Medical Wire, with long experience in the manufacture of devices for environmental monitoring, has a number of products which are particularly suited for sampling the near patient environment.

Polywipes™ are sterile premoistened blue cellulose sponge swabs, with a size 10cm x 5cm. The sponge material has been specially selected and prepared to ensure it is completely non-inhibitory to bacteria and other microorganisms. The sponge is premoistened in a phosphate buffer, and individually sealed in an easy to open peel pouch. Using sterile disposable gloves (which can be supplied) the sponge is used to sample the surface being tested. Because the amount of liquid within the sponge is large in comparison to any

traces of disinfectant, any antimicrobial substances in the sample are instantaneously diluted to levels well below lethality. The sponge is then placed in a suitable bag or container and taken to the laboratory for analysis. Polywipe sponges are particularly suitable for sampling larger surface areas, such as beds, floors, and cabinets.

NRS II™ swabs are sterile premoistened swabs on a sturdy blue plastic shaft, supplied in a dedicated tube containing a precise fill of neutralising rinse solution. The solution is formulated in accordance with ISO 18593, and will instantly neutralise all traces of disinfectants, allowing survival of all microorganisms on the sample. These swabs are particularly suitable for sampling small areas, or irregularly shaped surfaces such as monitors and lamps.

A new report shows that **Polywipe™** Sponge Swabs (Medical Wire) are particularly effective in the detection of *Clostridium difficile* on surfaces in the near patient environment.

It was shown that when combined with an enrichment step, *C. difficile* could be isolated and identified from surface concentrations as low as 2 cfu on a 30cm x 15cm aluminium sheet, even when dried for one hour.

Reference:

Best, E.L., W. N. Fawley, P. Parnell, & M. H. Wilcox. 2010, The Potential for Airborne Dispersal of *Clostridium difficile* from Symptomatic Patients, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, **50**:1450-1457

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