

Support for Monitoring the Scope Cleaning Process

JCAHO

- JCAHO in standards section Pl.5states that improved performance is achieved and sustained..
- JCAHO in standard section IC.1 statesthe organization uses a coordinated process to reduce the risks of endemic and epidemic nosocomial infections in patients and health care workers....
- JCAHO - Intent of IC.2 Through IC.5 - The hospital's infection control process is comprehensive, encompassing both patient care and employees health service. The mechanisms that support this process are based on current scientific knowledge, accepted practice guidelines, and applicable law and regulations. They address the infection issues that are epidemiologically important to the hospital.
- JCAHO in standard E.C.6.20- Medical equipment is maintained, tested and inspected.

The Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI), which is the primary resource for domestic and international standards for the medical industry, professions, and government, has issued its revised decontamination standard: ST35: 2003 – *Safe handling and biological decontamination of reusable medical devices in health care facilities and in non-clinical settings.*

This is the first domestically published standard to formally recommend professionals seek methods to verify the cleaning process. It does so in a brand new section: 7.4.

7.4.2 Cleaning agents

"Many types of soil could be present on reusable medical devices, but dried blood is especially difficult to clean..."

7.4.4 Verification of the cleaning process

".... today, verification is possible...there is an increasing awareness in sterile processing of the need to control and standardize the steps taken to ensure a sterile device for patient use."

".... disinfection and sterilization cannot be ensured unless the cleaning process is successful,.... it is incumbent upon professionals in the field to seek out whatever means are available and practical to verify this function."

"...For example, a 2 % hydrogen peroxide solution has been used to verify the removal of protein from the lumens of instruments.."

".... A quality system would call for the decontamination processing parameters to be monitored and documented."

9.2 Quality process

Procedures for decontamination should be based on a documented quality process that measures objective performance criteria...Monitoring frequency will vary, depending on the quality improvement goals, hospital policy and procedures for the handling of untoward events, and the type of performance measure...**Documentation of decontamination processing parameters (section 7)**. It is essential that decontamination processing parameters be monitored and documented, whether the process is accomplished by hand or mechanically.

IAHCSMM (International Association of Hospital Central Service Material Management)

This new standard is reflected in new Sterile Processing specific materials. For instance in IAHCSMM's New Central Service Technical Manual: 6th Edition a separate section has been included on ways to verify the cleaning process.

APIC GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION AND USE OF DISINFECTANTS; Vol.24, No4, pp.313-342, August 1996. State on page 314 ...the efficacy of disinfection is affected by a number of factors, each of which may nullify or limit the efficacy of the process...some of the factors that have been shown to affect disinfection efficacy are the previous cleaning of the object, the organic load on the object, the type and level of microbial contamination

Important comments from industry leaders on this new standard....

"From a user perspective, the new version of ST35 shows a better awareness of a facility's working environment", said Anne Cofiell, an AAMI Decontamination Committee member. "Take, for example, the water found in hospitals. Ten years ago, a Central Service director would not have given a second thought to the quality of the water being used," said Cofiell. "ST35 draws attention to the quality of water being used for the decontamination process." "This same "awareness" is seen throughout the standard", she said.