

Press release: WHO/Public Health/Touch surface material

Research proves antimicrobial copper reduces the risk of infections by more than 40%
*Study results presented today at World Health Organization
conference on infection prevention*

Brussels, July 1st 2011: Early results from a comprehensive, multi-site clinical trial in the US demonstrate that the use of antimicrobial copper surfaces in intensive care unit rooms resulted in a 40.4% reduction in the risk of acquiring a hospital infection. 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 1st, 2011ⁱ.



The study, funded by the US 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 rate 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 (MUSC) and the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, both in Charleston, South Carolina - replaced commonly-touched items such as bed rails, overbed tray tables, nurse call buttons and IV poles with antimicrobial copper versions.

Rooms with copper surfaces demonstrated a 97% reduction in surface pathogens, the same level 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 35-80% of patient infections, demonstrating how critical it is to keep hospitals clean. The copper objects used in the clinical trial supplemented cleaning protocols, lowered microbial levels, and resulted in a statistically significant reduction in the number of infections contracted by patients treated in those rooms."

In healthcare facilities around the world, 7 million infections occur every yearⁱⁱ. In addition, these infections cost over \$80 billion globally, according to the World Health Organizationⁱⁱⁱ.

Independent laboratory testing has demonstrated that, when cleaned regularly, antimicrobial copper products kill greater than 99.9% of microorganisms. These include deadly antibiotic-resistant bacteria such as MRSA, VRE and other bacteria which can cause fatal infections, such as *Clostridium difficile*. Antimicrobial copper has also been proven effective against viruses such as Influenza A and pathogenic fungi. Antimicrobial copper is the only family of solid materials that has been registered with the US Environmental Protection Agency as capable of killing disease-causing organisms.

For more information, visit www.antimicrobialcopper.com.

To view the interview with Dr. Schmidt at ICPIC, click [here](#).

ⁱ "Copper Surfaces in the ICU Reduced the Relative Risk of Acquiring an Infection While Hospitalized", Dr M. G. Schmidt, International Conference on Prevention and Infection Control, July 1st 13:00, Innovative Approaches to Infection Control Session

ⁱⁱ bioMérieux Corp, First World Forum on HCAIS, 2007

ⁱⁱⁱ World Health Organization, The Burden of Health Care-Associated Infection Worldwide, 2010



Copperised ICU room in MSKCC



Antimicrobial copper IV pole



Antimicrobial copper overbed table

Editor's Notes

About MUSC

Founded in 1824 in Charleston, The Medical University of South Carolina is the oldest medical school in the southern US. MUSC educates and trains more than 3,000 students and residents, and has nearly 11,000 employees, including 1,500 faculty members. MUSC operates a 750-bed medical center, which includes a nationally recognized Children's Hospital and a leading Institute of Psychiatry. For more information on academic information or clinical services, visit www.musc.edu or www.muschealth.com.

About The European Copper Institute:

The European Copper Institute (ECI) is a joint venture between the world's leading mining companies, custom smelters and semi-fabricators (represented by the International Copper Association, Ltd) and the European copper industry. Its mission is to promote copper's benefits to modern society across Europe through its headquarters in Brussels and its network of eleven national Copper Development Associations. www.eurocopper.org

Media relations:

Irina Dumitrescu
Communications Manager

European Copper Institute
Avenue de Tervueren 168
B-1150 Brussels, Belgium
irid@eurocopper.org
www.eurocopper.org
tel : 0032 473 87 15 00

Antimicrobial
Copper **Cu⁺**
