

**A** couple of years ago, BBC's *Panorama* ran a programme about how Bedford Hospital's chief executive one day a year rolls up his sleeves and joins the staff on the 'shop floor'. In the film, part of his activities included the deep clean of a ward where there had been an outbreak of what the Press likes to call a 'hospital superbug'. Here, all the equipment on the ward was taken to be decontaminated in a BES SaniPhase AQ4000 medical equipment washer, allowing staff to deep clean all the floor and wall surfaces without anything getting in their way. All the ward furniture, including beds, chairs, bedside tables, and even plastic flowers, went through the washer. In this way the ward was clear for reopening within 24-hours. Previously, wards affected like this would be closed for a number of days, costing a trust vast sums in lost bed days, and staff and patient disruption.

**Raising cleanliness star ratings**

In addition, hospitals using the BES SaniPhase AQ4000 have been able to raise their cleanliness star ratings. Practice varies between trusts, but in many cases it is the responsibility of the cleaning staff to 'clean' the lower parts of beds, and the nursing staff the upper sections.



Where does the lower stop and the upper start? Is this appropriate work that nurses should be doing? In addition, how effectively can one clean into all the nooks and crannies of a bedframe with a cloth? A study carried out in one trust in Cornwall showed the answer is "not very"!

Beds that had been manually cleaned as well as possible, when swabbed, showed a high incidence of MRSA remaining. Hospitals such as Bedford Hospital have a routine ward cleaning programme continuing around any unforeseen HAI

# Keeping wards open and patients protected

In this article we look at how the costs of an outbreak of something like Norwalk winter vomiting virus can be controlled, service returned to normal as quickly as possible, and staff and patient confidence in a hospital maintained, by the simplest of decontamination control measures.



*In tandem: City Hospital Sunderland has recently added a second SaniPhase medical equipment washer to handle its bariatric beds*

outbreaks, where all the ward furniture is processed mechanically through its SaniPhase washer.

**Looking to the future**

The demand for trusts to offer larger sized beds for their bariatric patients is increasing. Sunderland City Hospital, having used a SaniPhase AQ4000 for washing its standard beds for a few years, has recently added a second SaniPhase washer specially designed to take the larger sized beds it expects to be purchasing over the coming years. The older hospital lifts were not designed to take this larger sized

washing equipment, so delivery to the fifth floor of this hospital turned out to be an interesting logistics challenge - however, the facility is now in place, and the future is being catered for.

**Chemical versus thermal disinfection**

Currently there are no BSI or international standards covering washer-disinfectors for the likes of hospital beds, but a standard (ISO 15883-6) has been drafted for thermal disinfection.

However, there are benefits in low temperature chemical disinfection in that many pieces of hospital equipment have heat labile components made from

vinyls, etc which would be damaged or have their lives shortened by high temperatures. There are extensive cost savings on not needing to use energy to achieve higher temperatures, and the washing equipment does not need to have the same degree of insulation and protection, and is therefore more economical if the chemical disinfection option is selected. There are health and safety benefits of not

having high temperatures around, as well.

BES Decon offers both options: chemical low temperature disinfection through the SaniPhase AQ4000 range or thermal disinfection through the CISA range.

BES Decon, a division of BES Rehab, has been supplying decontamination equipment across the UK and Ireland for more than 10 years, and offers instrument as well as medical equipment washer-disinfectors, steam sterilizers, plasma sterilizers, and equipment that can sterilize heat labile endoscopes, as well as complete hospital track and trace packages.

## Food for Thought

**There has been concern whether some of the equipment in hospitals should be put through a washer-disinfector because of fears that water would get into the components. Medical equipment with electrical or electronic components that is put through a washer-disinfector is recommended to have the equipment rated to IP66, ie designed so that dust and water will not get into the components. The Food for Thought is that if**

**water and dust can get into the motors, electronics, etc, then so can contaminated body fluids, bacteria, etc, and then there is a nice warm breeding ground for the bacteria, and often 'cooling' fans wafting contaminated air back into circulation.**

**Lower rated components may be less expensive, but is this a false economy against the risks of cross contamination created, and the challenges of proper decontamination?**



*Thermal disinfection: the CISA bed and cart washer*

For further information, visit [www.besbiz.eu.com](http://www.besbiz.eu.com) e-mail [info@besbiz.eu.com](mailto:info@besbiz.eu.com) or call 0845 1300 237.

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