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CENTREPIECE AT
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OUR TEAMS KICKING GOALS

Contaminated mobile phones and identification access cards or reprocessing staff; disinfecting personal items

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Background: Mobile phones (MPs) and staff identification access cards (IDACs) can potentially harbour pathogenic bacteria. The use of MPs is usually discouraged during work time however IDACs are frequently used to access areas within and outside of the reprocessing environment. Frequent cleaning and disinfection of MPs and IDACs is generally not observed or enforced.

Objective: To determine contamination levels of MPs and IDACs and compare the difference between two disinfection methods; a common hospital brand disinfectant wipe and a UVC disinfection device.

Procedure / Methods: MPs and IDACs of reprocessing staff were swabbed. These items were then disinfected by either a common hospital brand disinfectant wipe or using a chemical free UVC disinfection device and swabbed post disinfection. Samples of pre and post disinfection were sent to the local laboratory for microbiological analysis.

Results / Discussion: Bacterial contamination was recovered from 21 of 24 MPs (87.5%) and 16 of 24 IDACs (66.7%). A proportion of the bacteria (48%) has pathogenic significance (eg Acinetobactor spp, Pseudomonas spp, Pantoea spp) in comparison to the bacteria indicating normal skin flora (52%). There were no distinct differences observed between the two disinfection methods.

Key Learning Outcomes: MPs and IDACs carry pathogenic bacteria that could pose a risk in reprocessing environments. As indicated in this study, MPs are more likely to carry higher contamination levels than IDACs and there is a need for these items to be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

Conclusion: Reprocessing staff MPs and IDACs are a source of contamination. Health service organisations including reprocessing environments may choose to introduce cleaning and disinfection protocols for personal items to reduce the risk of cross-contamination