



3M Infection Prevention Solutions

**Cleaning Endoscopes: Up Periscope! Is there danger ahead?  
Re-thinking the Risk for Endoscopy-Associated Infections**



San Francisco Bay Area APIC  
February 11, 2015  
Eden Medical Center  
Castro Valley, CA




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**Presenters:**

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*Oakland, CA.*

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**Learning Objectives**

- Summarize recent articles related to the increased risk for endoscopy-associated infections.
- Learn why assumptions on the effectiveness of endoscopy reprocessing is currently being re-evaluated
- Discuss some strategies for strengthening quality improvement programs.

-All images are from Google images unless otherwise indicated

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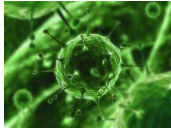
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More than 20 million GI endoscopic procedures are performed every year in the USA.

GI endoscopy is considered a very safe procedure. What is the incidence of pathogen transmission? Experts assume it is a rare event....



Are the assumptions valid

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### #4 ECRI Top Ten Healthcare Hazards for 2015, Up from #6 in 2014 and still top 10 from 2011, #3

“Although the incidence is likely very low, the consequences of reprocessing failures can be severe. Of the 13 immediate threat to life (ITL) discoveries from the Joint Commission surveys conducted in 2013, seven were directly related to the improper sterilization or high-level disinfection of equipment (Joint Commission 2014). This topic, which has appeared on our Top 10 Health Technology Hazards list in the past, retains a spot near the top because we continue to see media reports, receive problem reports, and investigate cases involving the use of potentially contaminated instruments on patients.”

#### 6. Inadequate Reprocessing of Endoscopes and Surgical Instruments

These 10 healthcare hazards have not changed in the number of reports of concern for the last five years. The most common hazard is inadequate reprocessing of endoscopes and surgical instruments. This hazard is a top concern for patients, families, and the public. It is also a top concern for healthcare providers and regulators. The hazard is a top concern for the media and the public. It is also a top concern for the industry and the government.



Reprocessing failures can be severe. Of the 13 immediate threat to life (ITL) discoveries from the Joint Commission surveys conducted in 2013, seven were directly related to the improper sterilization or high-level disinfection of equipment (Joint Commission 2014). This topic, which has appeared on our Top 10 Health Technology Hazards list in the past, retains a spot near the top because we continue to see media reports, receive problem reports, and investigate cases involving the use of potentially contaminated instruments on patients.”

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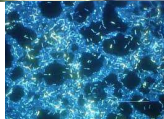
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### What are the assumptions?



- Reprocessing guidelines are effective and produce scopes that are clean and ready to use
- Endoscopy-associated infections are rare
- Reprocessing guidelines are being followed and lapses are rare

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**Assumptions and Risk Assessment Drives Behavior**

- When are patients notified? What do we tell them?
- Do we report the lapse? Do we even know when one has occurred?
- What actions do we take when a lapse occurs?




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"Flexible endoscope reprocessing has been shown to have a narrow margin of safety. Any slight deviation from the recommended reprocessing protocol can lead to the survival of microorganisms and an increased risk of infection."

Alfa, M.J., et al. (2006). *American Journal of Infection Control*, 34(9), 561-570.

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**Assumption #1:**  
 Reprocessing guidelines are being followed and lapses are rare.

- *"My people are following guidelines and are doing a good job, they aren't making mistakes."*
- *"These are good people who work hard and do their job well"*
- *"We are following SGNA guidelines to the letter."*

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### Why are flexible endoscopes difficult to reprocess?



- Complex design
- Multiple, long, narrow, channels that are difficult to clean
- Lack of consistent effective training
- Lack of time and resources for adequate reprocessing
- Visual inspection not adequate to monitor efficacy of reprocessing.
- > 120 step involved in reprocessing!!

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### Basic steps for Reprocessing Flexible Endoscopes

- Pre-cleaning – Bedside
- Transport to Reprocessing - <1 hour
- Manual Cleaning
- Rinsing
- High-level disinfection – Manual, Automated (AER)
- Drying (Alcohol flush, Air flush)
- Storage

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Observed Activity	Steps Completed (%) (n = 69)
> Leak test performed in clear water	77
> Disassemble endoscope completely	100
> Brush all endoscope channels and components	43
> Immerse endoscope completely in detergent	99
> Immerse components completely in detergent	99
> Flush endoscope with detergent	99
> Rinse endoscope with water	96
> Purge endoscope with air	84
> Load and complete automated cycle for high-level disinfection	100
> Flush endoscope with alcohol	86
> Use forced air to dry endoscope	45
> Wipe down external surfaces before hanging to dry	90

Guidelines were followed only 1.4% of the time (manual cleaning followed by automated high-level disinfection) vs 75.4% using ECR (automated cleaning and disinfection)

Multiple steps skipped 45% of the time.

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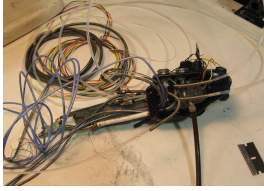
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***“The biggest problem is that we can’t see inside these scopes. To put it bluntly, we’re just taking a shot in the dark with reprocessing.”***

• Nancy Chobin, RN, St. Barnabas Health Care System, Livingston, New Jersey  
• “Probing the Challenges of Endoscopes”  
• Biomedical Instrumentation & Technology May/June 2011

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**Assumption 2:** When guidelines are followed the result is an endoscope that is clean and safe

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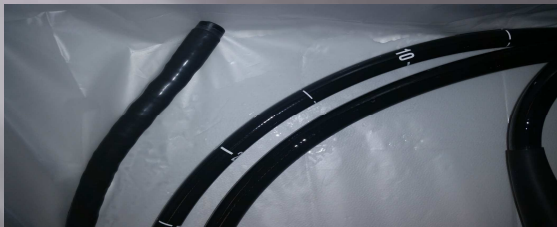
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## IS THIS SCOPE CLEAN?

WHAT DOES YOUR GUT TELL YOU?



Looks can be deceiving. This scope only received pre-cleaning in the patient room after the procedure. The Relative Light Unit (RLU) reading for the exterior of the distal tip was 633 RLU's



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### Water Quality & Filters

- In the U.S. as we know water quality varies and thus could affect the outcome of a process.
- Potable water although containing a low number of water borne microorganisms can still pose a risk when reprocessing flexible endoscopes.
- Some questions to ask: Are water softeners needed? Do we need a filtration system? If so what type?
- Custom Ultrasonics uses two different filter in their Automated Endoscope Reprocessors (AER's) that require routine changes.
  - a. .5 micron filter for removing gross sediment from water
  - b. 0.1 micron bacterial



5 micron filter      0.1 micron bacterial filter




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### All Scopes are NOT created equal

DUODENOSCOPE WITH ELEVATOR WIRE CHANNEL



DUODENOSCOPE WITHOUT ELEVATOR WIRE CHANNEL




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#### Assumption 2

When guidelines are followed the result is an endoscope that is clean and safe

- Michelle Alfa *et al.* 2012. **Establishing a clinically relevant bioburden benchmark: A quality indicator for adequate reprocessing and storage of flexible gastrointestinal endoscopes.** American Journal of Infection Control 40 p. 233-236.
- **Issues addressed:** Assess the bioburden level in routinely reprocessed flexible GI endoscopes that were stored over a week-end and to define a realistic benchmark for residual microbial levels.
- **Findings:** 14.1% of scopes tested had detectable growth after reprocessing.
- **Conclusions and Recommendations:** A benchmark of < 100 cfu/mL is achievable.

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**Bommarito, Marco, Grace Thornhill, Dan Morse. A Multi-site Field Study Evaluating the Effectiveness of Manual Cleaning of Flexible Endoscopes using an ATP Detection System. Oral Poster presentation. Session 2109, Publication 40. APIC2013 Ft. Lauderdale, FL. June 9,2013**

**- This abstract won the William A. Rutala Abstract Award—recognizes the best abstract on the subject of disinfection, sterilization, or antiseptis.**

**Summary**

- 3 out of 20 scopes used to examine GI tracts and colons were improperly cleaned

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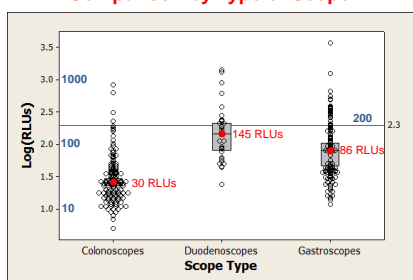
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**Comparison by Type of Scope**



- One-way ANOVA p-value<0.0005. All pair wise p-values are less than 0.05
- Manual cleaning of colonoscopes resulted in significantly lower RLU levels than gastroscopes and duodenoscopes.
- We observed failure rates in the manual cleaning step to be highest for duodenoscopes (30% failure rate, 10/30) and gastroscopes (24%, 28/116) and lowest for colonoscopes (3%, 4/129).

#APIC2013 Annual Educational Conference & International Meeting APIC2013 FT LAUDERDALE, FL JUNE 9-13

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**Reprocessing might not be enough to remove biofilm**

American Society for Microbiology, Denver, CO, May 18-21, 2013

**Transmission of multidrug-resistant organisms and other pathogens via contaminated endoscopes: Can buildup of biofilm be eliminated by routine cleaning and high-level disinfection?**

Alexandra Dirlam Langlay, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>, Pritish Tosh, MD<sup>2</sup>, Michelle Alfa, Ph.D., PhD<sup>3,4</sup>, Harry P. Wetzler, MD, MSPH<sup>1</sup>, Cori L. Ofstead, MSPH<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> Ofstead and Associates, Inc., St. Paul, MN, <sup>2</sup> Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, <sup>3</sup> Diagnostic Services of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, Canada; <sup>4</sup> University of Manitoba, Department of Medical Microbiology, Winnipeg, MB, Canada.

**Issues addressed:**

To assess the effectiveness of current reprocessing methods at preventing biofilm formation or removing it from endoscope channels.

**Findings/Conclusions**

- Biofilm (containing pathogens) can persist in fully-reprocessed endoscope channels
- Reprocessing deficiencies due to complex endoscope design
- Recommended reprocessing may not eliminate clinically relevant biofilm.

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Even if the scope is contaminated, the microbes are usually harmless and besides, the scope is being used in non-sterile sites of the body....

Examples of microbes found on endoscopes or in scope-related outbreaks

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|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>Acinetobacter baumannii</i> | <i>Ochrobacterum anthropi</i>            |
| <i>Aspergillus spp</i>         | <i>Proteus mirabilis</i>                 |
| <i>Burkholderia</i>            | <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>            |
| <i>Candida glabrata</i>        | <i>Salmonella spp</i>                    |
| <i>Clostridium difficile</i>   | <i>Serratia spp</i>                      |
| Enterobacteriaceae             | <i>Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)</i>      |
| <i>Enterococcus spp</i>        | Viruses: Hepatitis B & C, HIV, Condyloma |
| <i>E. coli</i>                 |  |
| <i>Mycobacterium chelonae</i>  | <i>Klebsiella pneumoniae (CRE)</i>       |
| <i>Mycobacterium fortuitum</i> |  |

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Assumption 3: Endoscopy-associated infections (EAI) are rare and often inconsequential

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Assumption 3:  
Endoscopy-associated infections (EAI) are rare and often inconsequential

**“The risk of EAI is extremely rare, 1 in 1.8 million procedures. Even if our patients were exposed we have not seen any problems.”**

There is now compelling evidence that the current risk estimate is wrong and that pathogens are being transmitted at a much higher rate than originally thought.



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### A carbapenem-resistant *Klebsiella pneumoniae* outbreak following bronchoscopy

Letters to the Editor / American Journal of Infection Control 42 (2013) 555–561

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Patient	Date of admission	Instance of CRKP	Type of infection/colonization	Route of transmission
A	May 14	May 20 (tracheal secretion)	Peritoneum, urine	Contact with nurse (patient)
B	May 19	May 21 (tracheal secretion)	Peritoneum, urine	Contact with nurse (patient)
C	May 22	May 22 (tracheal secretion)	Peritoneum, urine	Contact with patient A
D	May 25	May 26 (tracheal secretion)	Peritoneum	Bronchoscopy (instrument A)
E	April 18	June 10 (tracheal secretion)	Peritoneum	Bronchoscopy (instrument A)
F	May 25	June 11 (urine)	Colonization	Contact with patient E
G	May 26	June 12 (tracheal secret)	Colonization	Bronchoscopy (instrument A)
H	May 29	June 28 (conjunctival swab)	Colonization	Contact with patient E and F

The outbreak ended after both endoscopes were submitted to the manufacturer who observed defects of the internal channel surfaces in both instruments. After repair, the bronchoscopes were used again, but surveillance sampling of the endoscopes was performed in short time intervals after reprocessing of the instruments. Flushing solutions of bronchoscope A still showed bacterial contamination > 200 CFU/mL, but no CRKP was detected. Nevertheless, bronchoscope A was taken out of use. In addition, microbiologic testing of endoscopes, which was performed twice a year before the outbreak took place, is now conducted more frequently.

Janine Zweigner, MD et.al. Institute of Hygiene and Environmental Medicine-University Medicine, Berlin, Germany

Lead the Way  
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### Medical Device Reprocessing: Can We “Ban the Biofilm”?

Michelle J. Alfa, PhD, FCCM (presentation October, 2014)

**NDM *E. coli* strain:**  
What does this mean to me???

**North-eastern Illinois Outbreak:**  
First 9 cases linked to ERCP in hospital A (odds ratio 78)

**NDM *E. coli* strain:**  
What does this mean to me???

**North-eastern Illinois Outbreak:**

- **Colonization:** 50 of 90 other patients who had ERCPs at this site were screened and 46% were colonized with same NDM1 *E. coli* (95%)
- **ERCP elevator channel** grew NDM1-*E. coli* B, CRE-*K. pneumoniae*
- **No apparent breaks** in flexible endoscope reprocessing protocol??

**NDM-*E. coli*:**  
resistant to carbapenems

- Multi-antibiotic resistant
- Infections: blood, urine, biliary tract
- Treatment options limited (Arabas 2013):
  - Colistin
  - Tigecycline + aminoglycoside
- High transmission rates and high infection/mortality rates
- ?Biofilm development?

**Key Conclusion from Outbreaks**

- **Cleaning of elevator was inadequate; debris remained under elevator piece**

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**Research is always producing new data and sometimes, in light of that new data, we have to re-evaluate what we think is true.**

The World Is Flat

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***What are the new assumptions based on current clinical data?***

1. Endoscope reprocessing is often not performed according to standards and guidelines. Reprocessing lapses are common and often go undetected for prolonged periods of time. This has resulted in an increased risk of cross-contamination and infection.
2. Patients are being exposed to improperly cleaned and disinfected scopes resulting in serious infections with multi-drug resistant organisms.
3. The current risk estimate is inaccurate, outdated and based on flawed methodology. The current risk of EAI is unknown and likely much higher than originally thought.

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***What are some steps that we can take now?***

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**How well do you know this area?**



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### Implement better Quality Improvement Programs

Compare what is in place for Steam Sterilization processes to the high-level disinfection of flexible endoscopes.



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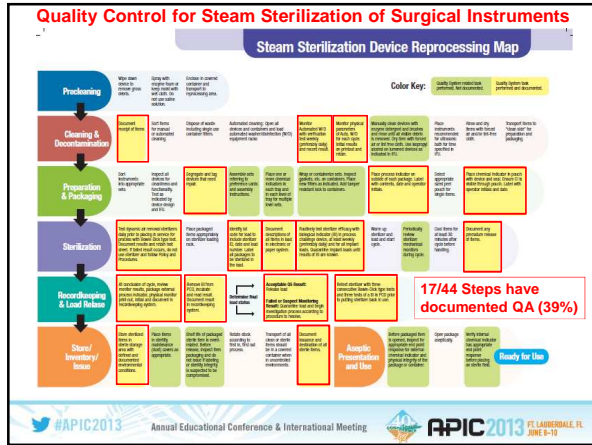
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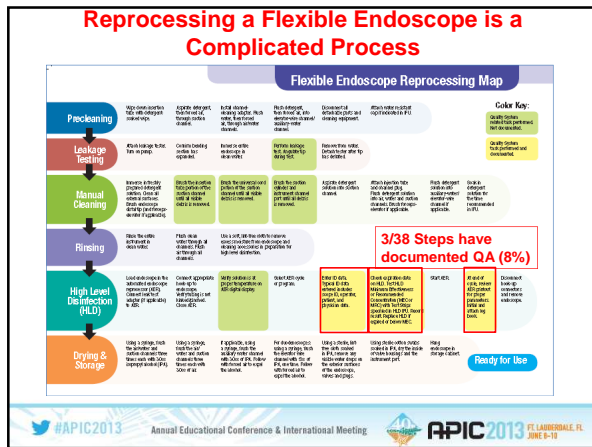
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**What can we do now?**

Implement a monitoring program to assess:

- ✓ Contamination levels
- ✓ Compliance to protocols
- ✓ Document Training and Competency
- ✓ Provide feedback to improve performance
- ✓ Assess if current protocols are effective

Do you know what is going on?

- ✓ Infection Control practices (PPE, Hand Hygiene, Surface Decontamination)
- ✓ Bedside flush
- ✓ Storage and Transportation (Drying, clean storage cabinets)
- ✓ How do you investigate lapses in reprocessing?

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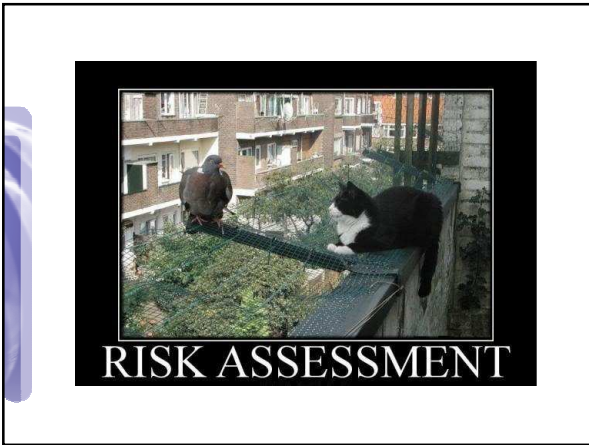
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**How clean is clean?**

Scope ID	Pre-Hand Wash Data			Post-Hand Wash Data			
	Carbohydrate	Protein	Blood	ATP-RLU	Carbohydrate	Protein	
GF1 #1	neg	neg	pos	9447	neg	neg	124
PCF #3	neg	neg	neg	16	neg	neg	3
CF #3	neg	neg	neg	27	neg	neg	6
CF #3	neg	neg	neg	22	neg	neg	9
CFB #1	neg	neg	neg	53	neg	neg	13
PCF-01M #2	neg	neg	neg	59	neg	neg	50
GF #3	neg	pos	neg	204	neg	neg	121
PCF-01M #4	neg	neg	neg	167	neg	neg	104
GF #4	neg	neg	neg	37	neg	neg	74
CFB-01M #3	neg	neg	neg	62	neg	neg	74
PCF-01M #2	neg	neg	neg	60	neg	neg	30
GF-01M #7	neg	neg	neg	12,032	neg	pos	436
SG #6	neg	neg	neg	5	neg	neg	15
PCF-01M #4	neg	neg	neg	79	neg	neg	112
CFB-01M #2	neg	neg	neg	33	neg	neg	26
CFB-01M #4	neg	neg	neg	223	neg	neg	22
CFB-01M #2	neg	neg	neg	16	neg	neg	115
CFB-01M #2	neg	neg	neg	78	neg	neg	78
GF-01M #2	neg	neg	pos	1183	neg	neg	276
CFB-01M #1	neg	neg	neg	67	neg	neg	31
bioMark Clean POS	POS	POS	POS				
CFB #8	neg	neg	neg	51	neg	neg	7
CFB #8	neg	neg	neg	82	neg	neg	9
CFB-01M #3	neg	neg	neg	17	neg	neg	7
PCF-01M #4	neg	neg	pos	422	neg	neg	7
CFB-01M #4	neg	neg	pos	245	neg	neg	4
CFB-01M #6	neg	neg	pos	79	neg	neg	8
GF-01M #4	neg	neg	neg	222	neg	neg	8

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