

Antimicrobial Copper

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Antimicrobial
Copper
is a newsletter specially
created for healthcare
interest groups

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Project Safe Seoul



Korea's largest hospital, the 2700-bed Asan Medical Centre, is taking part in an antimicrobial copper pilot to help stop the spread of infections.

The hospital will install a range of copper surfaces and furniture in a 30-bed intensive care unit by the end of March, and then monitor its performance and bacterial loads over the following months.

Two local companies, LS Nikko, a member of the International Copper Association (ICA), and Poongsan, the country's largest fabricator, are also taking part. Together with medical supply company Young Dong Medical Co. Ltd. they are helping create hospital furniture made from copper, including handles, carts, tabletops, bed rails and IV posts.

"We hope to be able to commercialize a number of the products that have been developed for the trial and then market them to the roughly 2,600 health facilities around the country," Chris Lee from ICA Korea said.

Chris Lee, Country Manager - Korea of International Copper Association (ICA) can be contacted at chris.lee@copper.or.kr.

About Asan Medical Centre

Asan Medical Center is the parent of seven hospitals which are part of the Asan Foundation established in 1977 and has non-profit operations in areas including healthcare, social work, scholarship, and R&D support. In particular, providing equal opportunity access to top-quality healthcare for residents in rural areas, AMC hospitals have become the embodiment of the Asan Foundation's mission and also that of their founder, Mr. Chung Ju-Yung, whose philosophy was "to help the neediest in our society."

Proper Hand Hygiene Not Happening

Good hand hygiene is seen as one of the most effective strategies to fight the spread of germs in hospitals, but despite being widely promoted-and funded-new research says it is still not happening.

The study in the February edition of the American Journal of Infection Control (AJIC) found that the hands of health care workers were one of the major causes of hospital-acquired infections, but that "compliance with hand hygiene procedures remains unacceptably low."

In fact the authors found that "compliance rates differ among institutions and are as low 20% in some institutions."

The study can be found at [http://www.ajicjournal.org/issues/contents?issue_key=50196-6553\(10\)X0012-8](http://www.ajicjournal.org/issues/contents?issue_key=50196-6553(10)X0012-8)

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More Facilities Add Copper

Two more European health facilities have turned to Antimicrobial Copper for protection.

One of the most interesting is the new Centre Inter G n rationnel Multi Accueil in Laval, France, that is both a 60 bed care home for the elderly and a nursery for 35 infants. Believed to be the first health care facility in the country to introduce copper touch surfaces, all the handrails and door furniture were produced by French company Cuivrinox and bear the Antimicrobial Copper Cu+ mark-indicating the products are capable of continuously killing pathogenic microbes, 24/7, in-between cleans.

Holland has also joined the trend. The University Medical Center Groningen Hospital's Cancer Center opened last November and was fitted out with door handles made from bronze, an alloy of copper. The handles were designed by renowned German architect Hans Kollhoff for manufacturer FSB, and were created to be both aesthetically pleasing and effective against germs.

More information on both stories can be found at www.antimicrobialcopper.com



Australians Warned On Life-Threatening Bacteria

A recent summit of infectious disease experts in Sydney, Australia has warned that antibiotics will become ineffective in the coming decade.

Not only are antibiotic-resistant superbugs spreading quickly around the world, the experts told the media, but for the first time in decades there's no new generation of more powerful drugs waiting in the wings to stop them.

The Summit used the warning to call on the Australian Government to develop a national strategy and formal monitoring system to deal with the looming issue.

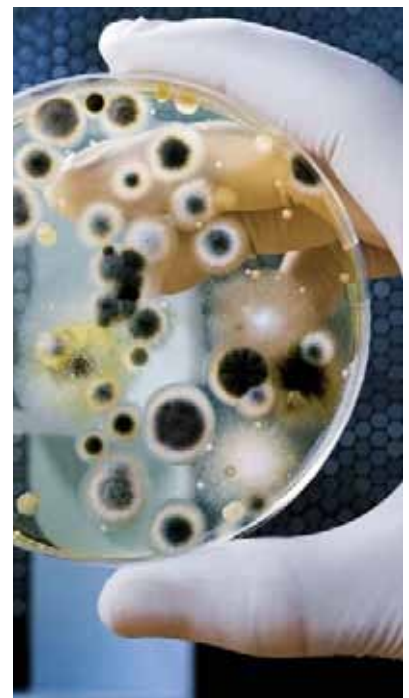
"It's a major public health problem and one that has really crept under the government's health radar," Dr. Tom Gottlieb, Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases President, said. He added that unless dealt with the Australian health system could slip back to the situation in the 1930's when people faced death and illness from routine surgery because of unstoppable infections.

The warning came as a hospital ward at the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in Perth, West Australia, was evacuated in February after an outbreak of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Staff blamed the outbreak on a reduction in cleaning staff and on management forcing orderlies to undertake cleaning duties without proper training.

But it's not only the well known culprits like MRSA that are causing problems-34 per cent of all hospital-acquired staphylococcal infections were resistant to the antibiotic methicillin in 2009 in Australia-but different strains like CA-MRSA or even new threats like the hypervirulent, antibiotic-resistant Quebec strain of Clostridium difficile that infected three patients at a Melbourne hospital last year.

John Fennell from the Copper Development Centre.Oceania in Sydney-part of ICA-agreed that a national approach was now crucial, adding that he would be seeking to include a role for antimicrobial surfaces in any broad strategy.

Summit website: <http://www.antimicrobialsommit.com.au/>



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India Launches Cu+ and Major Video

India launched the Antimicrobial Copper brand, also known as Cu+, at one of the country's most important healthcare conferences and exhibitions-Hospital Infrastructure India or HII-in Mumbai at the end of last year.

HII put Cu+ in front of India's most influential health sector professionals. In conjunction with an exhibition stall, collateral material like brochures, media articles and a Cu+ Kit Bag, ICA India also launched a major 10-minute Antimicrobial Copper video that was screened extensively during the conference. The video is now being used to promote the Cu+ message with key stakeholders and the public, and can be seen on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwGvXjWiEh4>

The International Copper Promotion Council (India)-part of the ICA-has also been actively raising awareness around the country and taking the message to more specialized events, including Clairvoyance 2010 organized by Tata Institute of Social Sciences Hospital Administrators and the Confederation of Indian Industries-Health Group (Western Region).

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Even Safer Than First Thought

Evidence that copper surfaces are antimicrobial is already convincing, but a new paper says they do it by causing massive membrane damage to microbes within minutes of exposure.

The study appeared in the February 2011 issue of the journal of Applied and Environmental Microbiology and is, say the authors, the first one to demonstrate this "mechanism of bacteriocide".

"When microbes were exposed to copper surfaces, we observed contact killing to take place at the rate of tens to hundreds of millions of bacterial cells within minutes," said Gregor Grass of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, one of the study's authors. "This means that usually no live microorganisms can be recovered from copper surfaces after exposure."

The authors also saw great benefit of using copper and alloy surfaces as a passive defense against pathogens in hospitals, adding that there's been no evidence that microbes ever develop resistance to copper, saying that installing them is cost-effective as "the effect does not wear off".

Critically, the researchers were able to show that copper's performance was not caused through mutations and DNA lesions, meaning it poses no risks for humans.

More information at <http://aem.asm.org/>



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Cleaner, Healthier Air Conditioners

China's fourth-largest air conditioner maker, the Guangdong Chigo Air Conditioning Ltd Co. launched the world's first antimicrobial air conditioner at the end of 2010.

Developed in partnership with the International Copper Association China, the company has said the new appliance—which replaces traditional aluminum fins with copper-fits within their global growth strategy that's focused on energy-saving, healthy and environmentally friendly products.

Chigo, as the company's known, already produces around 10 million air conditioners a year and exports half of them, but is predicting they'll sell roughly 1,000 of the new air conditioners a month, especially in more developed markets overseas.

While more expensive than Chigo's usual product range, they're also a lot more energy efficient, shaving up to 56% off normal power costs, and adding what the company hopes will be a big drawer for energy conscious customers.

www.antimicrobialcopper.com

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Copper is an essential element, meaning that it is an essential inorganic nutrient that is required by both plants and animals in order to live.

Copper, brass and bronze kill pathogens—including “superbug” MRSA—responsible for hospital- and community-acquired infections.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved the registration of antimicrobial copper alloys, with public health claims.

These public health claims acknowledge that copper, brass and bronze are capable of killing harmful, potentially deadly bacteria. Copper is the first solid surface material to receive this type of EPA registration, which is supported by extensive antimicrobial efficacy testing.