

# Birmingham beats the bugs

Housekeeping services plays a key role in fighting infections at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

Over 25% of the terminal cleans at the impressive, new Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, include a 'bug beating' HPV dry gas system. Undertaken by the housekeeping team using lightweight, easily portable machines, the service has been an important element of the hospital's successful programme of reducing infections.

Simon Sharpe, facilities manager housekeeping services at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, told *Hospital Bulletin*: "In the old hospital we used to have a company that came to do the job for us. They'd use a number of machines to do a whole ward. It was expensive and time consuming.

"In the new hospital we've more single rooms, so we invested in two of our own HPV (hydrogen peroxide vapour) machines. But it was still a long process, sometimes requiring up to three people, and the machines were quite large and relatively complex.

## Cost and ease of use were key factors in the decision

"With the need to provide a faster turnaround for bed spaces we had to find an easier process. We undertook some market research and looked at what was out there," explained Simon. "The criteria we were looking for was that the equipment had to be easy to use, portable and simple to operate, allowing the housekeeping assistants as well as supervisors to operate it."

With a proven efficacy to kill bacteria, spores, viruses and fungi, the Oxypharm airborne disinfection system appeared to 'fit the bill' exactly. Neill Simmons of distributor Innotech Hygiene Solutions demonstrated the system.

"We tested some Oxypharm machines in a side room and an empty ward, using test strips and sampling," said Simon. And the result? The trust now has eight Oxypharm machines. "They were a success.

"Four are permanently located



Simon Sharpe, facilities manager housekeeping services at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, with Lorraine Jones, housekeeping supervisor

in areas where they are in regular use: theatres, critical care, renal dialysis - where due to the needs of the patients in these areas the same room can be treated with HPV up to three times a day - and one in the old Queen Elizabeth Hospital as we've re-opened some of the wards. The other four machines are in daily use with the rapid response team right across the hospital.

"The machines have been very reliable. On the odd occasion when we've had a problem, usually user related, Neill has called in and collected the machine, leaving us with a replacement."

Housekeeping supervisor Jackie Kinsella said: "The machines are easy to use and easy to get from A to B, which is important in a large hospital like this.

"The machines are very straightforward. They're marked to indicate the setting required for side rooms and four-bedded bays - the areas that are most regularly treated with HPV. From pressing the button to being able to re-enter the area it's just 34 minutes. We've done regular sampling

and testing to ensure the timing and levels are correct."

Simon explained: "We do three or four tests a month to ensure the process continues to perform correctly. The team leader puts test papers around the room at key points, then monitors the gas levels outside the room and, by putting the gas monitor tube under the door, inside the room, recording the levels

of hydrogen peroxide. The test papers are affixed to the record sheet. So we continue to ensure the room is safe to enter after 30 minutes."

Jackie added: "The machines are a lot easier to use than the ones we had. They get the job done and give us the timing we needed. When we do a theatre we use two machines set at a higher level."

Echoing Jackie's comments, housekeeping supervisor Lorraine Jones said: "It's a light machine. They're very easy to use which helps with training staff.

Underlining how safe the process is for all medical equipment too, Lorraine said: "When we're treating a side room, nurses put extra equipment in to decontaminate it at the same time.

"Most of our housekeeping assistants are now trained in the operation of the HPV machines."

All HPV treatments are recorded in the Ward Cleaning Folder. "They're signed off by the housekeeper or ward manager," said Simon. "Copies are kept in the cleaning folder for reference. The folder is an

aid to provide assurance of the cleaning delivered in the patient environment. We've done a lot on ensuring we are recording work activity accurately. Housekeeping assistants record what they've done and any additional tasks they're asked to undertake. They also record anything that might prevent them undertaking the task. It helps the housekeeping assistants to plan their day, making cleaning more effective and targeted."

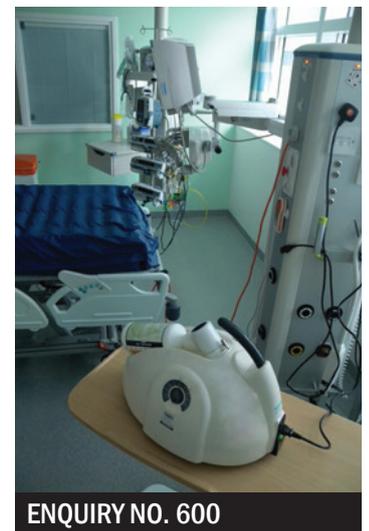
Simon explained: "We introduced the Oxypharm machines two-and-a-half-years ago. Prior to that we were using the larger equipment.

"The nursing teams accept the need for HPV. Using the Oxypharm machines it's a good process. The patients and staff are re-assured."

Simon added: "The machines are very much part of the infection prevention and control team's plan for reducing hospital infections and any environmental contamination.

"We are fortunate that the layout of the hospital with our large number of single rooms helps us to routinely provide a process for terminal cleaning, which includes HPV. This is all part of the infection prevention and control strategy."

For further information, call Neill Simmons at Innotech Hygiene Solutions on 07791 797955, e-mail [neill@innotechhygienesolutions.com](mailto:neill@innotechhygienesolutions.com) or visit [www.innotechhygienesolutions.com](http://www.innotechhygienesolutions.com)



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