



Issue: Use of Spray / Trigger bottles

Raised by: Chair RDH Infection Control Committee (Dr Gary Lum) - Memorandum

Background: Dr Gary Lum issued a memo requesting the removal of spray/trigger bottles from use within RDH. This decision was based on evidence of heavy bacterial growths occurring within spray bottles and their trigger mechanisms, resulting in dispersal of pathogens.

Discussion: Spray / Trigger bottles are useful in the application of solutions including cleaning products and air-fresheners, and have been widely adopted for use in household and industry. They are currently available to Remote Health Centres through some NT Regional Hospital Stores.

There have been recent email discussions across the Australian Infection Control Association network in relation to the contamination risks associated with the use of spray trigger bottles, and significant reference was made to a paper presented at the Queensland Infection Control Association conference in 2001, entitled 'Trigger Happy: Hidden dangers of spray bottles'. Noting an apparent increase in the use of spray trigger bottles throughout the hospital, the RDH Infection Control Committee raised it to their agenda.

The primary concerns over the use of spray bottles include:

1. **Infection:** reported findings of heavy growths of pathogens in spray bottles, which are of clinical significance in the hospital setting; the inability to totally clean and dry the trigger mechanism (therefore it remains damp and promotes bacterial growth); the dispersal of those pathogens by the spray mechanism;
2. **OH&S:** the potential for the chemical to cause injury as a respiratory irritant for staff and visitors.
3. Anecdotally most refillable bottles would appear to be poorly labelled and dated (making it unclear what the product is and when it was mixed)

Best Practice Group discussions revealed a clear recognition of the usefulness of spray bottles in Health Centres. However, given the risks for the systems becoming a reservoir for infection, and the strong recommendation from DHCS Infection Control representatives, there was unanimous agreement to follow RDH's lead, and remove spray bottles from RHB Health Centre use.

The preferred option for cleaning which best meets current infection control standards is the use of a cloth with warm soapy water.

Consultation: Michelle Callard (Infection Control, ASH)

References: Australian Infection Control Assoc Email Discussion chain;
RDH Memo: 'Use of Spray Bottles in Royal Darwin Hospital' (dated 18 April, 2007);
Abstract - 'Trigger Happy: Hidden dangers of spray bottles' from the Queensland Infection Control Association conference (2001).

Outcome: **Spray / Trigger bottles are not to be used in RHB Health Centres**

NT Regional Stores will be requested to remove spray bottles from Imprest stock lists of all RHB Health Centres.