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First Hospital in France Installs Antimicrobial Copper Touch Surfaces to Combat HCAs

The *Centre hospitalier de Rambouillet*, in the Parisian region, is the first hospital in France to install antimicrobial copper touch surfaces to fight pathogens and reduce the risk of healthcare-associated infections (HCAs) for its patients.

Bed rails, trolleys, taps, handrails, door handles and push plates made of copper and copper alloys have been fitted in the intensive care and paediatric units. Antimicrobial copper touch surfaces are proven capable of continuously eliminating bacteria, viruses and fungi – including MRSA, *C. difficile* and Influenza A – 24/7, from clinical environments.

Rambouillet's Director, Jean-Pierre Richard, says: "Based on 15 years of scientific research carried out in laboratories and in hospitals that demonstrates copper's antimicrobial properties, we decided to equip our intensive care and paediatric units accordingly. We decided to affect a proactive risk prevention policy by using innovative materials that will have no impact on the way the medical staff work. The main purpose of this operation is to improve the well-being and safety of our patients."

Dr Patrick Pina, Head of Rambouillet Hospital's hygiene department, says of the measure: "Being confronted with germs and bacteria that are more and more resistant to antibiotic treatment means that disease prevention is now a priority for us. It is crucial for units like intensive care and paediatrics to take measures to prevent any propagation of pathogens that might lead to an epidemic among patients who are particularly vulnerable."

Dr Pina is responsible for assessing the impact of this infection prevention measure on the rate of HCAs in the hospital, and data generated will be used to inform the French Ministry of Health's evaluation of adoption of antimicrobial copper surfaces in healthcare.

He adds: "The assessment protocol we have developed will enable us to determine whether copper can play a central role in the prevention of infections in hospital. We hope our results will be as promising as the ones obtained in the United States."

Last July, Professor Michael Schmidt of the Medical University of South Carolina presented at ICPI, in Geneva, on the initial results¹ of a study carried out in three American hospitals,

revealing that replacing just six key touch surfaces with antimicrobial copper equivalents reduced patients' risk of acquiring a healthcare-associated infections by over 40%.

Director Jean-Pierre Richard explains: "There is growing evidence that the environment has a significant role to play in the transmission of infection, and alongside standard hygiene practices such as systematic hand washing, copper touch surfaces help to considerably reduce microbial contamination. Antimicrobial copper works as a supplement to standard infection prevention measures, working to reduce surface contamination in between cleans where non-copper surfaces will harbour bacteria and viruses until they are next cleaned."

Claude Rambaud, Chairwoman of the Lien – a patients' association – notes: "Every year, nosocomial diseases kill 3,500 people who go for treatment in French hospitals. This figure is comparable to the annual number of road accident victims! To summarise, the fight against these infections must be a cause for national mobilisation. If the results of the French study are conclusive, as has been the case with every study carried out thus far in hospitals around the world, we must take them into account and ensure copper is seen as a serious way of improving policies aimed at reducing risks in hospitals."

For more information about copper's antimicrobial properties, the online product directory and installations from around the world, visit www.antimicrobialcopper.org.



Editor's Notes

Reference

¹ "Copper Surfaces in the ICU Reduced the Relative Risk of Acquiring an Infection While Hospitalized", Dr M. G. Schmidt, International Conference on Prevention and Infection Control, July 1st 13:00, Innovative Approaches to Infection Control Session. Click [here](#) for more information.

About the Cu+ Mark

All the copper components at Rambouillet bear the Cu+ mark, which denotes they are made from copper or copper alloys (collectively referred to as 'antimicrobial copper') with proven antimicrobial efficacy, backed by solid scientific evidence that can be reviewed on www.antimicrobialcopper.org.

The use of the Cu+ mark by an organisation indicates that a copper centre, on behalf of the International Copper Association, has granted permission to do so based upon adherence to strict usage rules. These rules guide that organisation's understanding of the underlying technology and the way they promote, advise and deploy it in line with existing research, regulatory and legislative requirements.

About Centre hospitalier de Rambouillet

Centre hospitalier de Rambouillet is a public hospital in the Sud-Yvelines area, near Paris, which is recognised at regional level. Although it is a local hospital, it also cares for patients who live in neighbouring regions, such as Eure-et-Loir. It is located at the heart of the town, but has a catchment area including a population of over 300,000 inhabitants.

www.ch-rambouillet.fr

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