Sterigenics buys Nelson Laboratories

Sterigenics International, a global provider of contract sterilisation, gamma technologies and medical isotopes, has acquired Nelson Laboratories, a US provider of life-cycle microbiology testing services. Financial terms were not disclosed.

Nelson Labs employs 570 people, including more than 300 scientists and 60 microbiologists. All Nelson Labs operations will remain in Salt Lake City and will be combined with Sterigenics' microbiological and analytical testing and consultancy, SteriPro Labs.

In the future, the combined businesses will trade under the Nelson Labs brand name and operate as a standalone business unit within Sterigenics International. Jeffery Nelson will be President of Nelson Labs and with the Sterigenics contract sterilisation business, the deal will create the largest fully integrated global sterilisation and lab services firm in the world, the firms said.

'This is a significant strategic acquisition to help build out Sterigenics' lab testing and service capabilities on a global scale, enabling us to better serve our multinational customers,' said Michael Mulhern, CEO of Sterigenics International.

www.sterigenics.com

SINGLE-USE TOWELS LEAST LIKELY TO SPREAD VIRUSES, SAY RESEARCHERS

New independent research has found that single-use paper towels help to minimise the spread of viruses, including those associated with gastro-intestinal infections such as norovirus and rotavirus. Single-use towels disperse fewer micro-organisms into the environment than jet air dryers and warm air dryers and also help to reduce the risk that viruses are blown into the faces of small children accompanying adults in the washroom, the researchers say.

Microbiologists Dr Patrick Kimmitt and Keith Redway of the University of Westminster studied the transmission of viruses using three different hand-drying methods: a jet air dryer, a warm air dryer and paper towels.[1] The jet air dryer was found to transmit more virus particles further and at different heights than the other methods, with airborne virus counts also significantly greater.

Combined average results at distances up to three metres away from the hand-drying devices showed that a jet air dryer produced over 20 times more viral plaques than a warm air dryer and over 190 times more than paper towels. Air samples collected 15 minutes after use showed that the jet air dryer produced over 50 times more viral plaques than a warm air dryer and over 100 times more than paper towels.

'Our findings clearly indicate that single-use paper towels spread the lowest number of viruses of all the hand-drying methods we tested,' said Kimmitt. 'It is estimated that cross-infection contributes to 40% of cases of healthcare-associated infections and effective hygiene in hand washing and drying is an essential step in minimising such infections.'

Previous research undertaken by the Universities of Leeds and Westminster has also found that jet air and warm air hand dryers can spread more bacteria and other microbes in a washroom environment than paper towels.

1. Kimmitt, P.T. & Redway, K.F., *Journal of Applied Microbiology*. **120**, 478–486. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jam.13014/abstract).

www.europeantissue.com

EDITORIAL

Funding the battle against HCAIs

Antibiotic resistance (AR) remains a major threat to modern economies and more needs to be done to tackle it, warned UK Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, when he met members of the International Monetary Fund last month. Osborne said that by 2050, AR could reduce global GDP by up to 3.5% – a cumulative cost of $100 trillion and that AR will become 'an even deadlier threat than cancer' without co-ordinated global action to incentivise the development of new drugs.

In the meantime the UK's overcrowded and understaffed healthcare facilities face the considerable challenge of preventing the spread of the resistant bacteria within the healthcare environment with minimal budgets.

There are numerous innovative technologies and products being developed ranging from furniture and furnishings with antimicrobial touch surfaces to hand hygiene compliance aids and room disinfection systems that can help limit the spread of germs. But their uptake is often slow, regionalised and, if it comes at a cost, further implementation is unlikely.

Even spending money on basics such as hand hygiene training poses a conundrum as to which method to follow – the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 3-step hand hygiene techniques using alcohol-based handrub or the World Health Organization's six-step hand hygiene technique. According to a new study led by Jacqui Reilly, professor of infection prevention and control at Glasgow Caledonian University in Scotland, and published in the journal *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*, WHO's six-step technique was better in reducing bacteria on healthcare workers' hands but – perhaps not surprisingly – compliance dropped with the longer regime.

We hope to hear discussions and solutions on all these topics at the first Infection Prevention and Contamination Control (IPCC) event being organised by *Cleanroom Technology* and *Building Better Healthcare* in Nottingham on 12 May.

To attend and join the debate visit www.hpcimedia.com/IPCC for details.

SUSAN BIRKS
DEPUTY EDITOR

PYLOTE LAUNCHES PYCLEAR PROTECTION IN THE US

French company Pylote, a new player in the green mineral chemical sector, is launching Pyclear Protection in the US market.

Developed from innovative mineral microspheres, the product is said to be a breakthrough innovation that replaces the antimicrobial preservatives (i.e. parabens) used in many pharmaceuticals or in cosmetic and food products without the need to change packaging or existing manufacturing processes. It is suitable for multi-dose eye drop flasks, catheters and nasal-delivered preparations.

Devices using Pylote technology have the additional advantage of removing the risk of contamination via the nozzle tips, due to unintentional contact with skin and/or lacrimal fluid. www.pylote.com

Pyclear Protection is said to be a breakthrough innovation that replaces antimicrobial preservatives