

# People prefer paper towels to dry hands

An observational study conducted in four washrooms during ISSA/Interclean Amsterdam 2016 last month revealed that 90% of people showed a behavioural preference for paper towels over jet air dryers in the washroom.

The study, undertaken by the European Tissue Symposium (ETS), observed the behaviour of 3,879 visitors – 2,474 men and 1,405 women – when washing and drying their hands following a visit to the washroom. Four washrooms – two men's and two women's – were equipped with both paper towels and jet air dryers, situated directly above each other.

Faced with a choice of drying methods, 90% of men and 91% of women chose paper towels over jet air dryers.

"We undertook this study during Interclean/ISSA in order to give us a better understanding of people's behaviour in washrooms," explained ETS Chairman, Roberto Berardi. "The results are very clear. People overwhelmingly plump for paper towels as the preferred way to dry their hands following a visit to the washroom."

## Paper Towels – Jet Air Dryers Users preference

Among Men, the preference for using Paper Towels was amazing: 90% vs. 10% using the Jet Air Dryers. The total is above 100%, because some of the users of the Jet Air Dryers, also used Paper Towels to finish the drying job.

Men using Paper Towels 90 %

Men using Jet Air Dryers 10 %

Among Women, the preference for using Paper Towels was even stronger: 91% vs. 9% using the Jet Air Dryers. The total is above 100%, because some of the users of the Jet Air Dryers, also used Paper Towels to finish the drying job.

Women using Paper Towels 91 %

Women using Jet Air Dryers 9 %

## Hand Washing Behavior – Water & Soap or just Water

73% of the Men washed their hands with Water and Soap and 27% just with water.

The usage of Soap was higher than the one measured in previous studies, probably because the visitors of Interclean, mostly Cleaning Industry Professionals, have a higher than average understanding of the importance of Soap for proper hand washing and also because the washrooms were always in excellent or top classed condition.

Men using Water & Soap 73 %

Men using just Water 27 %

77% of the women washed their hands with Water and Soap, 23% just with water.

Women using Water & Soap 77 %

Women using just water 23 %

The study also looked at the prevalence of soap use in the handwashing process. It found that 26% of visitors used just water to wash their hands while 74% used soap and water. The use of soap was higher than in

previous studies, probably due to the fact that users were cleaning industry professionals.

Previously, research by leading microbiologists has shown single use towels to offer the most hygienic way to dry hands following hand washing during a visit to the washroom.

"We now have proof that in addition to helping prevent the spread of viruses, nothing is more hygienic than paper to dry your hands, but also that paper towels are the most preferred option among users," concluded Roberto Berardi. "Facilities managers should take note if they want clients to be happy and healthy following a trip to the washroom."

ISSA/Interclean was held in Amsterdam from 10-13 May 2016. The most important exhibition in the global Cleaning Industry calendar and it welcomed some 30,000 visitors.

