

## Trip Hazards and Hygiene

**Whilst much has been done to reduce trip hazards and increase hygiene in both laboratory and healthcare environments, there are still some areas where improvement efforts fall noticeably short. There are, however, simple and effective solutions that can help rectify this.**

An analysis of global outbreak report data from a poster presented at the recent IPS meeting in London, the Scottish National HAI Prevalence Survey suggests that approximately 18 percent of infections are due to contaminated, communally used patient care equipment.<sup>1</sup> Among other things, beds and patient anaesthetic trollies are wheeled around from room to room, whilst any cables, pipes and hoses associated with the equipment become extremely dirty simply by lying around on the floor. Dust, bacteria, blood and spilled solutions are all hygiene issues that must be contended with. When moving intensive care equipment between wards and operating theatres, it is absolutely vital that they are clean if HAIs are to be avoided. However, there does not appear to be any clear policy or guidelines associated with cleaning this communal equipment, in spite of it harbouring the bacteria that cause almost a fifth of infections.

Furthermore, the litany of cables, pipes and hoses is a dangerous trip hazard, which is extremely risky in a live operating theatre environment. The Department of Health and Human Service's *Slip, Trip and Fall Prevention for Healthcare Workers* notes that 'Exposed cords on the floor, stretched across walkways, and tangled near work spaces can catch an employee's foot and lead to a trip and fall incident'.<sup>2</sup> One possible prevention strategy this publication gives is the use of 'cord organizers to bundle cords'.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, such a solution represents an effective way of reducing both the infection and the patient hazard risks. Custom-made, anti-bacterially coated cable jackets help tidy up cables, make them less likely to harbour bacteria and easier to clean as well.

CableJacketz™ are made from an extremely durable vinyl coated polyester fabric which is Microbial Resistant!, Flame Resistant, Fluid, Mould and Rot proof. Cablejacketz™ can be custom made to virtually any diameter required in the clinical environment.

Using them can save your hospital or laboratory money in three ways.

Firstly, they drastically reduce the amount of time your staff spends untangling and cleaning medical hoses, cables and cords. As a result, their use reduces operating room turnover time between cases by 32-40%, whilst also aiding infection control at the same time.

Secondly, they protect hoses, cables and cords, increasing the lifespan of these products and therefore reducing equipment costs.

Finally, they eliminate tripping hazards – medical equipment hoses, cables and cords represent one of the top three trip hazards in the hospital environment. Given that the USA, Workplace Safety & Insurance Board states that an average trip or fall claim costs \$11,771, with additional factors such as staff-replacement, lost productivity, and equipment damages increasing this to as much as \$47,084, it is crucial to avoid such a significant, unnecessary outlay.

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<sup>1</sup> NHS Scotland, 'Utilising data from the Scottish National HAI Prevalence Survey to estimate the risk of HAI from environmental contamination'

<sup>2</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, *Slip, Trip, and Fall Prevention for Healthcare Workers*, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication Number 2011-123, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Supplied with a 1 year warranty, CableJacketz™ are a simple solution to an expensive problem. Queen Victoria hospital, East Grinstead, have just purchased multiple Cablejacketz™ to compliment new anaesthetic trolleys in theatres. The hospital are very pleased with the investment.

Stewart Munro

Pentland Medical