

Surgical Instruments Working Group (CLEANICAL) Berlin – since 1993

Letter by Dr. med. Dipl.-Ing. Thomas W. Fengler, CLEANICAL GmbH, Genthiner Str. 11, 10785 Berlin, Germany, E-mail: fengler@cleanical.de, on the publication by G. Westermann and P. Heeg in issue no. 6/2012 of Central Service: «Cleaning – from nonentity to decisive process step»

It often happens that after several years of cooperation, one does not at all realize that one has been working together for so long (Tübingen and Berlin Working Group in CMP and SMP). That was borne out in the article describing how cleaning had moved beyond its nonentity status to becoming an integral component of the decontamination process, including the many discussions of the endeavours to quantify cleaning.

In 1993 I met up with two very important partners in Berlin, one being a surgeon performing a large number of laparoscopy cholecystectomies (up to 1000 per year), Prof. Dr. E. Kraas, and the other was H. Pahlke, head of the Central Sterile Supply Department (CSSD) at the Moabit Hospital. We discussed the hygiene and functional requirements to be met by those surgical instruments that could not be dismantled (Fig. 1). A surgical suction device was modified to demonstrate that blood residues could regularly be rinsed off from tubular instruments. That marked the beginning of cooperation, lasting many years, which – against the background of hospital requirements – tried to find solutions that would meet the functional and hygiene demands addressed to the fine mechanical instruments used in «key hole surgery». Coining a name for the latter was never a problem.

- Surgery: This involved cutting, i.e. invasive medical devices
- Instruments: Medical treatment calls for the use of suitable instruments
- Working group: all participants belonged to the working group

In the meantime, our findings are being cited even by the FDA, since in the USA, too, cleaning is increasingly recognized as being the most important step of the decontamination process for reusable medical devices. One reason for this is that at present, there are not just single-use and reusable medical devices, but also multiple-use medical devices.

And even though H. Pahlke, my friend and loyal partner over several years, passed away in 2010, the cooperation we jointly established with manufacturers and users continues in the firms CMP (validation), SMP (laboratory), CLEANICAL and the international Medical Devices & Processes FORUM (events and multilingual publication series No. 1 – 17 since 1999). ■

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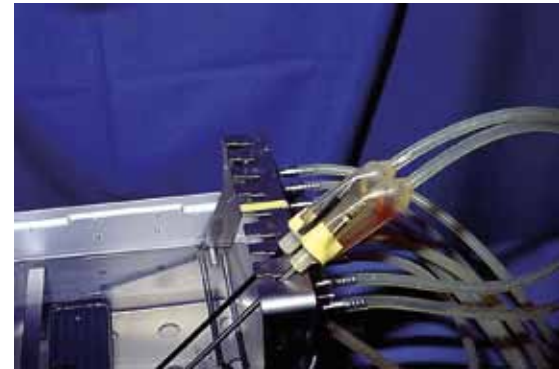


Fig. 1