



## Daily Briefing

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Antimicrobial wipes may spread bacteria across surfaces

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A study presented yesterday at the **American Society of Microbiology's** General Meeting in Boston found that disinfectant wipes routinely used by hospital staff to decontaminate hard surfaces may instead contribute to the spread of pathogens across multiple surfaces, Reuters reports. For the study, researchers from the Welsh School of Pharmacy at Cardiff University in Wales used a surveillance program in ICUs at two hospitals to observe hospital staff using antimicrobial wipes on surfaces such as bedrails, monitors, tables, and key pads. The researchers found that the wipes were being applied to the same surface several times and sometimes used on consecutive surfaces before being discarded. To determine the efficacy of several commercially available wipes in disinfecting surfaces contaminated with strains of *Staphylococcus aureus*, the researchers replicated the actions in a laboratory setting using a three-step system that measured the removal and transmission of pathogens and the antimicrobial properties of the wipes. Although some of the tested wipes removed more bacteria from surfaces than others, none of the wipes killed the pathogens; as a result, bacteria were transferred to other surfaces upon reuse. Saying that current methods to test the performance of antimicrobial wipes are "inappropriate" because "they do not assess the ability of wipes to actually disinfect surfaces," the researchers suggest that the most effective practice to prevent the spread of bacteria with wipes is to "ensure the wipe is used only once on one surface." The researchers anticipate that the study will promote a "worldwide routine surveillance program examining the effectiveness of disinfectants used in hospitals" (Kahn, [Reuters](#), 6/3; [ScienceDaily](#), 6/4).