Author's response to reviews

Title: Comparative cost-efficiency of the EVOTECH Endoscope Cleaner and Reprocessor versus manual cleaning plus automated endoscope reprocessing in a real-world Canadian hospital endoscopy setting.

Authors:

Lindy Forte (lindy.forte@sympatico.ca)
Cynthia Shum (cshum@its.jnj.com)

Version: 4 Date: 8 July 2011

Author's response to reviews:

Lindy Forte
VALORE Research
55 Princeton Rd.
Toronto, ON
Canada
M8X 2E3
July 6, 2011

Editor
BioMed Central Ltd
Floor 6
236 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1X 8HB
United Kingdom

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed our revised manuscript entitled “Comparative cost-efficiency of the EVOTECH Endoscope Cleaner and Reprocessor versus manual cleaning plus automated endoscope reprocessing in a real-world Canadian hospital endoscopy setting”.

We thank referees 2, 3 and 4 for their endorsement of the revised paper “to be accepted as it is”.

Regarding the comments of Referee 1, we have addressed all minor and major comments as indicated below. In many cases, the reviewer’s comments require the authors to speculate on what would occur under conditions that were not encountered and, thus, not measured in our study. These scenarios are,
therefore, outside the scope of the work that was conducted. Nevertheless, as much as possible, we have tried to ensure that readers understand that there are situations in which the EVOTECH ECR cannot be used without manual cleaning of some endoscopes. Furthermore, we have indicated in numerous places that this research was conducted from a Canadian perspective; it would not be scientifically sound to compare all results and conclusions to a U.S. perspective when we have not conducted our research in a U.S. setting and we do not feel capable of making these judgements in a manner that is scientific.

We believe that further delays in publication of an article that has been determined to be an “important paper in its field” by 3 of 4 referees based on a requirement to speculate extensively on other scenarios not measured is not in the best interests of potential readers interested in this topic.

Discretionary revisions:
2. We have clarified that the additional tap water rinse is a process in place at the clinic.
4. The statement that the EVOTECH ECR was the first reprocessor to receive a cleaning claim by the FDA is correct. By stating that it was the first does not preclude that there are now others approved. We have not done a search to find out which ones are approved. Given that this is a paper written from the perspective of Canada as noted in the title, we find it awkward to always refer to the U.S. when we describe the study results. We also prefer not to speculate on Canadian vs. U.S. comparisons for all of the results and conclusions as the study was not conducted in the U.S. and speculation about the U.S. would not be scientifically sound.
5. We have referred to the corrected paper by Alfa et al.

Minor essential revisions:
2. See discretionary revision #4. We don’t believe that it is necessary to tell U.S. reviewers that they can substitute a U.S. hourly labour cost for the Canadian labour cost in order to adapt the analysis for the U.S. because the U.S. cost for all supplies would also have to be substituted. We don’t believe that it is necessary to tell readers that they may do this to adapt the analysis to their perspective; we feel that it is intuitive.
4. See discretionary revision #1 above. We have indicated that the 28-29 degree temperature is the practice in place at the clinic. None of the cost calculations are based on the temperature used so that, whether or not the clinic exceeds the target temperature of 25 degrees, the results and conclusions do not change.

Major compulsory revisions:
1. We have added additional context around the perspective of the analysis and principal audience for clarification as per the reviewer’s alternate suggestion.
2. We will remove the statement about occupational disease. A comparison of the health effects of different disinfectants is well beyond the scope of this paper.
3. It is not possible to speculate on the costs related to situations where the
EVOTECH cannot be used as these situations were not encountered nor measured in the current study. In the discussion, we have stated that further study would be required.

We hope that the revised manuscript will meet with the Editors’ approval and the standards for publication in the Journal. Please do not hesitate to email or call me if you have any further questions or comments. I can be reached at 416-453-8350 or lindy.forte@sympatico.ca.

Sincerely,

Lindy Forte, MSc