Reviewer's report

Title: How long do nosocomial pathogens persist on inanimate surfaces? A systemic review

Version: 2 Date: 8 June 2006

Reviewer: Bala Hota

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1) Missing source material: The authors have missed some relevant published literature about the role of the inanimate environment in cross-transmission of nosocomial pathogens. Some examples are:


2) In the section, interpretation of studies on page 5, note is made of figure 1. I could not find this figure in the draft manuscript. Was it removed?

3) Increased effort should be made to put the information into context. For which pathogens does data support a role of environmental contamination? For which does data discount its role? For example, data are stronger for C. difficile and VRE, and weaker for P. aeruginosa. At least an acknowledgement of explicit differences beyond stating that it is controversial would be helpful.

4) Review of the methods used to determine durability of contamination of the inanimate environment would be useful. For which organisms is the data experimental, i.e., inoculation of sample of countertop with follow up measures of contamination? In which cases was it observational in clinical situations, i.e., culturing of the inanimate environment during outbreaks? For example, data show that Acinetobacter baumanii can persist in the environment and on fomites, be durable, but that in outbreaks, contamination is polyclonal, confusing the relationship of contamination with cross-colonization.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The entire text should be reviewed for grammatical errors and spelling.
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'