

Joint statement of the Disinfectants' Commission of the German Society for Hygiene and Microbiology

The members of the Disinfectants' Commission of the German Society for Hygiene and Microbiology (DGHM) deem it necessary to issue this further statement after publication of the „Joint statement by the infection control scientific societies on surface disinfection“ (HygMed 2000; 25 [11]: 469–472).

1

In the „Joint statement by the infection control scientific societies on surface disinfection“, reference is made to the awarding of the German Environmental Prize to Prof. Dr. Daschner. This reference was made because

- during the award ceremony, a film of F. Daschner's publication „Routine surface disinfection measures are superfluous“ (Führen und Wirtschaften 2000; 17 (4): 407–408) was shown which, inter alia, was the reason for the statement issued by the specialist societies and
- in the certificate the following reasons, inter alia, were given for the award: „He was able to demonstrate in several publications acknowledged in scientific circles that it is possible to curtail the use of environmentally polluting substances, such as detergent and disinfectant chemicals, medicaments and antibiotics, without violating the required hygiene standard, while at the same time being able to reduce operating costs in hospitals“.

The members of the Disinfectants' Commission of the DGHM interpret this as being a direct reference to the Joint Statement and vehemently distance themselves from the declaration made in the certificate, as shown above, in particular with regards to detergent and disinfectant chemicals.

2

The members of the Disinfectants' Commission of the DGHM are in Germany among the most important independent experts for disinfection procedures in the domain of human medicine. They note that to their knowledge no scientific works have been published by F.

Daschner which corroborate the accuracy of the reasons given in the certificate of the environmental prize with reference to the „Curtailed use of detergent and disinfectant chemicals without violation of the required hygiene standard“.

Having critically appraised the works published by F. Daschner, the members of the Disinfectants' Commission of the DGHM note that F. Daschner is not to be viewed as an acknowledged expert in the field of disinfectants' use and testing in the medical setting (1–8).

3

As demonstrated, inter alia, in the „Joint statement by the infection control scientific societies on surface disinfection“, F. Daschner enunciates theories and makes claims which he is unable to corroborate with the necessary scientific evidence.

Furthermore, several literature sources are cited by F. Daschner when enunciating theories and making claims but on critical appraisal it is revealed that in some cases the opposite conclusions from those cited by him are to be drawn (11, 12).

In some cases the literature citations are taken out of their context or only those passages that corroborate his theories are selectively cited (11, 12). Publications coming to other conclusions as a result of scientific investigations are systematically ignored by F. Daschner (13–19).

Since in general it is not clear from F. Daschner's declarations to what extent these statements reflect his own personal views or represent the views of the National Reference Centre for Hospital Hygiene (NRZ KH), F. Daschner is called upon to clearly state in future publications whether the views professed are his own or those of the NRZ KH and Robert Koch-Institute. Due to the considerable endangerment that could arise for the patient and personnel if F. Daschner's recommendations were to be implemented, the members of

the Disinfectants' Commission of the DGHM recommend that all healthcare workers should at present disregard F. Daschner's recommendations and observe only the regulation for hospital hygiene and infection prevention of the Robert Koch Institute as the guideline for hygiene measures, which with the coming into force of the Infection Protection Act has a legal foundation.

References see German text page 25