disinfection of intracavity ultrasound transducers

asa **GUIDELINES**

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The Australian Sonographers Association advises all members that disinfection of intracavity ultrasound transducers should meet the appropriate recognised standards. This includes transducers used for:

- transvaginal,
- transoesophageal and
- transrectal sonographic examinations.

There are two relevant national standards:

1. AS/NZS 4187–2003 Cleaning, disinfecting and sterilising reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment and maintenance of associated environments in health care facilities [1].
2. Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010) [2].

The Australian/New Zealand standard 4187–2003 states that "Only disinfectants labelled as "Instrument grade disinfectants" in accordance with the requirements of the Therapeutic Goods Administration are suitable for use as disinfectants for reusable instruments. A high-level instrument grade disinfectant shall be the minimum level used to effect disinfection of semi-critical instruments which contact unbroken mucous membranes that are not normally sterile" [1].

Intracavity ultrasound transducers are categorised as class IIb, semi-critical reusable instruments requiring high-level instrument grade disinfection [2,3].

Therefore, only chemicals registered with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) as high-level instrument grade disinfectants for class IIb medical devices are to be used for intracavity ultrasound transducers and these include:

- Ortho-phthalaldehyde i.e. Cidex OPA (most commonly used due to larger molecular structure, providing less vapour)
- Hydrogen Peroxide, used with the Trophon EPR System
- Chlorine Dioxide, used with the Tristel Wipes System
- Peracetic Acid, used with the STERIS System
- Glutaraldehyde.

Prior to use, ensure the disinfectant is listed in the transducer manufacturer's user manual as compatible for use with the specific model of transducer to be disinfected.

The disinfectant manufacturer's safety recommendations and instructions should always be followed [1]. Be sure to refer to the disinfectant manufacturer's Material Safety Data Sheets and follow the labelled conditions for use of their specific products.

Users should take care at all times when mixing, using or disposing of disinfectants due to the potential hazardous nature of the materials.

Relevant Occupational Health and Safety regulations must be followed, and it is recommended that appropriate Occupational Health and Safety protocols are developed and all staff are made familiar with these protocols.

The ASA advises that Sodium Hypochlorite (Milton) and Virkon are NOT recognised by the TGA as a high level instrument grade disinfectant.

Transducers that come into contact with intact skin require intermediate-level or low-level instrument grade disinfectant.

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1 AS/NZS 4187–2003 *Cleaning, disinfecting and sterilizing reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment and maintenance of associated environments in health care facilities.*

2 Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2010) National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Available at: National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/node/30290

3 *How are disinfectants regulated?* Therapeutic Goods Administration. Available at: http://www.tga.gov.au/devices/devices.htm

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