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## Non-touch fittings and X-infection

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*Legionella*, non-touch fittings, noscomial infection, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*

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## Context

Non-touch water taps (NTWTs) are increasingly being installed in hospitals to reduce water consumption and supposedly prevent cross-infection. This study examined the bacteriological water quality of NTWTs in an Austrian hospital, which are activated by an infrared sensor.

## Significant findings

Contamination with *Pseudomonas* occurred in 74% NTWTs without temperature selection, 7% NTWTs with temperature selection, and 0% of conventional taps. Contamination with *Legionella* occurred in 100% NTWTs and 33% conventional taps. However there were no clinical cases of *Legionella* or *Pseudomonas* reported over this time frame. Subsequent analysis of water from the central pipe system and NTWT's fitting identified the technical equipment of the NTWTs as the source of contamination.

## Comments

The technical components of NTWTs promote contamination since water rests in a column prior to the outlet at 350C and both water flow and pressure are low when the infrared sensor is activated. Although techniques to reduce cross-infection are to be applauded, further evaluation of the technical equipment of NTWTs is required to ensure that these systems do not become the breeding ground for bacteria.

# Methods

Thirty-eight NTWTs were installed: 23 without temperature selection, 15 with temperature selection. These were compared to 10 conventional taps. Bacteriological screening for organisms, including *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Legionella species*, was performed.

# Additional information

## References

1. Halabi M, Wiesholzer-Pitt M, Schober J, Mittermayer H: Non-touch fittings in hospitals: a possible source of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Legionella* spp. J Hosp Infect. 2001, 49: 117-121.