

'Crime Scene Investigation' methods could help in the battle against hospital infections

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Inspired by the popular television drama CSI, investigators in the Netherlands have trialed methods used by forensic scientists at crime scenes to highlight infection risks in their hospital. Researchers at Deventer Hospital used Luminol, a chemical used by crime scene investigators, to detect traces of blood in their haemodialysis unit.

Luminol reacts with microscopic amounts of blood to produce bright blue luminescence, which allows investigators to track invisible blood splashes in the environment. The results of this experiment are reported in a new study, published in the *Journal of Hospital Infection*.

Bergervoet et al tested their apparently clean unit with Luminol. They found traces of blood on many surfaces including cupboard handles, telephones, computer keyboards, side tables and the floor, even though some of these surfaces had been cleaned. They expect that these results can be reproduced in other hospitals that plan to use Luminol in the future as described in their paper.

The group of researchers suggests that following on from their research, Luminol could be used as part of a hospital infection control regimen, in order to highlight risks associated with the contamination of the hospital environment with blood. Bergervoet et al specifically discuss the possibility that the hepatitis C virus may be transmitted via such environmental contamination.

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commented: “The aim of this article is to introduce this method to the infection control professionals so it can be used to monitor cleaning and disinfection procedures and alert healthcare workers to the possibility of contamination of the hospital environment with blood.”

Source: Elsevier

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