

New feeding tube connectors will improve patient safety

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New feeding tube connectors, designed by an international standards process, will be available soon and will improve patient safety.

According to an invited review published in the OnlineFirst version of *Nutrition in Clinical Practice (NCP)*, the official journal of the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (A.S.P.E.N.), the new connectors will greatly reduce the occurrence of misconnection that can be harmful and even fatal to patients.

Small-bore connectors, which are used to join medical devices, components, and accessories to deliver fluids or gases, can allow misconnections with other [medical devices](#). Serious patient harm, including death, can occur if fluids, medications, or nutrition formulas intended for the gastrointestinal tract are administered via the wrong route.

"This has been a serious concern for decades and one for which we have long advocated for a solution," said Peggi Guenter, PhD, RN, Senior Director of Clinical Practice, Advocacy, and Research Affairs for A.S.P.E.N. and author of the review. "Our mission is to ensure that feeding systems for patients are as safe and effective as possible. We are honored to play a vital role in helping to bring this advance about and to inform the healthcare community about its availability."

The new connectors were designed by an International Organization of Standardization (ISO) standards development process. ISO is the global

standard for governments, purchasing organizations, manufacturers, and users.

Standards for a newly designed connector will provide greater ability for different manufacturers' devices to integrate, while making it difficult, if not impossible, for unrelated delivery systems to be connected. A phased approach will start with enteral devices as early as 4th Quarter 2014.

"It is important that providers begin planning now to use these new connectors when they become available to ease the transition," said Guenter. "Clinicians should seek education and information from appropriate resources and work with their suppliers to see when these connectors will be available to their institution or agency."

More information: Additional information on the developing small-bore connector standards is available at www.nutritioncare.org.

Provided by American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (A.S.P.E.N.)

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