

Microbiological surveillance: Global variation and what is the European pathway

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Presentation

Nurses

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The speaker reviewed critical challenges in endoscope microbiological sampling and outlined emerging ISO standard recommendations aimed at harmonizing methods across countries to enable meaningful quality comparisons.

KEY POINTS

- The speaker reported that published endoscope contamination rates vary from 0.4% to 49%, primarily due to different sampling methods rather than actual quality differences, making cross-study and cross-country comparisons unreliable.
- ISO draft standards recommend sampling one representative endoscope per type every three months, with all endoscopes sampled at least annually; France has proposed a new ISO work item for endoscope sampling standardization.
- The speaker described two sampling approaches: flush-and-purge for air/water and suction channels, and flush-brush-flush for biopsy channels, with mechanical brushing shown to increase bacterial recovery.
- Membrane filtration is the preferred culturing method; the ISO group suggests incubation on PCA-type agar for three days at 35-37°C to target pathogenic bacteria.
- Interpretation thresholds presented were a target of less than 20 CFU per endoscope, an alert level of 20-100 CFU, and an action level above 100 CFU requiring endoscope withdrawal from use.
- The speaker stated that existing sampling methods have poor recovery rates, with the best achieving only 40% recovery, meaning actual contamination may be underestimated; recovery validation will be required in future standards.

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