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- M91 Control of Emerging Multiply Resistant *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (MRPSA) in a Tertiary Care Teaching Hospital. L. Dowdy, S. Roger, V. Duquesne, B. Alfonso, J. Gonzalez, T. Cleary, O. Martinez.
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- M82 A Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Computerized National Surveillance System. GA. Roselle, SM. Kralovic, SE. Dane, IA. Simbartl, LH. Danko, KW. Kizer.
- M83 Surveillance for nosocomial infections in a long-term care facility utilizing NNIS device-specific infection rates. KM. Ramsey, CF. Hoff, V. Danford.

## *Bacillus cereus* Outbreak From Contaminated Ventilator Circuits

Gina Pugliese, RN, MS  
Martin S. Favero, PhD

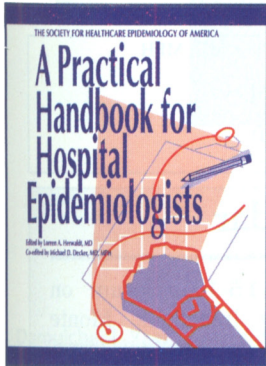
An outbreak of *Bacillus cereus* respiratory tract infections affecting six ventilated preterm neonates over a 2-week period was reported by Gray and colleagues. Reusable ventilator circuits were identified as the cause of the outbreak. Ordinarily these were reprocessed on the neonatal unit (NNU), first through a washing machine and then through a low-

temperature steam (LTS) disinfectant. The onset of the outbreak coincided with a breakdown of the LTS facility, which necessitated sending the washed circuits off-site for LTS disinfection. The washing machine was shown to be contaminated with the same serovars of *B cereus* as those isolated from patients. Two critical steps in the off-site LTS disinfection process allowed exsorption and multiplication of *B cereus*: the circuits were dried inadequately after processing, and return of the moist circuits to the NNU

often was delayed. The outbreak was terminated by withdrawal of the heat-disinfected ventilator circuits. This outbreak emphasizes the need for high standards where medical equipment is reprocessed, especially for use in vulnerable patients.

FROM: Gray J, George R, Durbin GA, Ewer K, Hocking D, Morgan M. An outbreak of *Bacillus cereus* respiratory tract infections on a neonatal unit due to contaminated ventilator circuits. *J Hosp Infect* 1999;41:19-22.

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