

ADDENDUM

***Legionella pneumophila* in a hospital water system following a nosocomial outbreak: prevalence, monoclonal antibody subgrouping and effect of control measures**

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Dr Jennifer S. Colbourne of the Thames Water Authority has drawn our attention to the need to clarify the nature of the washers used as one of the attempted control measures following the outbreak of Legionnaires' disease described by us (Ribeiro *et al.* 1987, *Epid. Inf.* **98**, 253–262).

The washers were manufactured by Carl Freudenberg (West Germany) and distributed by Barking Grohe (Barking, Essex). The base material from which the washers were made was nitrile rubber. In 1984 when the washers were used, this base material was listed in the current edition of the Water Fittings and Materials Directory (Water Research Council 1984) as an 'approved' material (Reference number 7904526). We now understand the washers themselves had not been tested at the time and that the manufacturing processes used in making washers may change the growth promoting potential of the base material (J. S. Colbourne. Personal Communication). We also understand that since 1986 the base material itself is no longer on the 'approved' list. There must be some doubt therefore as to whether the washers fitted in this study were suitable for use in hospital water systems. We are advised that fittings need to be tested in their final form before they can be included in an 'approved' list such as the Water Fittings and Material Directory and that reference should be made to this Directory when seeking replacement washers for water systems.

We wish to thank Dr Jennifer Colbourne for her help in clarifying this matter.

REFERENCE

WATER RESEARCH CENTRE (1984). The Water Fittings and Materials Directory 1984/5. Issue 1 – Unwins Ltd., Woking.