

International experts respond to critical state of SSI in APAC

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Leading specialists discuss SSI prevention and recent guidelines regarding the use of triclosan-coated sutures in all types of surgery



Ethicon, part of the Johnson & Johnson Medical Devices Companies, brought together a consortium of international experts to discuss surgical site infection (SSI) prevention across the Asia Pacific at the first-ever Care+ Masters Symposium. SSIs can be a serious complication of surgery and are becoming the most common healthcare-associated infection (HAI), contributing to rising morbidity and mortality rates among affected patients. The meeting, held at the company's offices in Singapore, provided delegates with an invaluable opportunity to learn how they can implement SSI prevention guidelines and surveillance methods across the Asia Pacific.

Speaking at the event, Dr Liau Kiu Hin, Medical Director & Senior Consultant Surgeon, Mt Elizabeth Novena Hospital & Specialist Centre, commented: "Surgical site infections are preventable and avoidable. Achieving zero SSI rates for every clean operation should be the goal for all surgeons. Appropriate postoperative wound management is important to mitigate and eliminate the risk of infections."

He further commented, "I strongly advocate our healthcare institutions and communities to adopt evidence-based practices, such as appropriate and timely use of prophylactic anti-microbial, and capitalise on the use of innovative technologies, including advanced wound management devices and antimicrobial-coated sutures. Surgeons and healthcare workers must be aware that we are in the best position to prevent and reduce any opportunities for life-threatening infections to set in for clean operations. We can make a difference in our patients' outcomes."

Globally, health authorities recognize the severity of the SSI issue. In the Asia Pacific, the consequences are significant with the SSI mortality rate reaching up to 46% in some countries. SSI-associated costs can also accumulate to millions of dollars for health care systems across the region and increase a patient's hospital stay by 20 or more days. In 2016, the World Health Organization issued global guidelines on SSI prevention, in which they suggest the use of triclosan-coated sutures in all types of surgery to reduce the incidence of SSIs. These recommendations have received further support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Ethicon is the maker of Plus Antibacterial Sutures, the only triclosan-coated sutures available globally that inhibit the colonization of bacteria commonly associated with SSIs on the suture. Ethicon offers a comprehensive range of triclosan-coated absorbable sutures both in knotless and traditional variations. By using a bundled surgical approach that includes Plus Antibacterial Sutures, infections are reduced by 28%. Most recently, countries including China, Japan, India, Australia and the Philippines have recommended Plus Antibacterial Sutures in their 'national infection control guidelines'.

"We can live in a world where surgical site infections are no longer burdening patients with unnecessary pain and healthcare systems with unnecessary costs," said Iain Hamilton, Vice President, Ethicon, Asia Pacific. "This Symposium represents our commitment towards advancing SSI prevention – particularly in the Asia Pacific where the prevalence is high. I am confident that, together with the healthcare community, we can reduce the burden of SSIs and improve

outcomes for patients in this region and across the world.”