



1300 SUMNER AVE. • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44115-2851
(216) 241-7333 • FAX (216) 241-0105
E-Mail: cffa@chemicalfabricsandfilm.com
URL: www.chemicalfabricsandfilm.com

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Susan Young
CFFA
(216) 241-7333

Barbara Paynter
Edward Howard & Co.
(216) 781-2400

Study Verifies Importance of Vinyl Upholstery for Infection Control

CLEVELAND, October 30, 2000 – A recent study that shows the bacteria-resistant benefits of vinyl upholstery in healthcare facilities comes as no surprise to members of the Chemical Fabrics & Film Association (CFFA) Decorative Products Division.

Manufacturers of vinyl upholstery fabrics have long known that their materials are easier to clean and disinfect than fabric upholstery, making it easier for hospitals to prevent the spread of infection-causing bacteria from one patient to another.

An article in the August 2000 issue of the American Journal of Infection Control reported the results of a study conducted by scientists at the Departments of Medicine and Pathology at Northwestern University Medical School, the Infection Control and Prevention Department, and the Prevention Epicenter, Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

The study found that vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE), a drug-resistant bacteria, can survive on and be transmitted through patient contact with fabric upholstery in a healthcare setting. This means that a patient carrying these bacteria could contaminate a chair, for example, and a second patient could pick up the bacteria as much as one week later through direct contact with the chair's upholstery.

However, when vinyl chairs in the test were contaminated with VRE, the bacteria did not survive routine cleaning of the vinyl upholstery. This led the researchers to conclude that an easily cleanable, nonporous material such as vinyl can be significant for infection control in healthcare settings.

The research highlights the importance of being able to disinfect a patient's room when he or she leaves the hospital. “Vinyl upholstery and wallcoverings have long been the materials of choice in healthcare settings because they are easy to clean, durable and attractive,” according to Fred Frohlich of Proquinal S.A., a manufacturer of vinyl upholstery fabrics and chairman of CFFA’s Decorative Products Division. “Vinyl also is available in many patterns, colors and textures that add to the warmth of patient rooms, helping them feel more at home,” he added. Proquinal and other members of CFFA specialize in vinyl upholstery fabrics for use in offices, restaurants, waiting rooms, medical centers, clinics, auditoriums, hospitals, airports and convention centers.

The Chemical Fabrics & Film Association is an international trade association representing the major manufacturers of polymer-based fabric and film products, used in the building and construction, medical, automotive and many other industries. CFFA provides education on the benefits and uses of chemical fabrics and film, and supports technical research and standards development within the industry. The organization was founded in 1927 and is based in Cleveland.

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