

The advantages of disposables



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It never fails to amaze me how the pharmaceutical industry is in a constant state of evolution. Countless new products, updated procedures and improved techniques are introduced every day and it's up to all of us who work in the field to keep abreast of these changes – from the minor procedure amendment in the clinic or pharmacy where one works to the global launch of a medicine.

An example of one such recent change on a national scale is that in family planning clinics in the UK, there has been a noticeable move away from re-usable instruments and kits to disposable ones. It seems that the main reason for this is that the Department of Health recently introduced measures to ensure that autoclaves that sterilise instruments and kits are under contract to be serviced by specialised companies at least four times a year. This has a huge cost implication.

Also, because UK family planning clinics don't tend to have their own autoclaves, they send their kits and instruments out to their local hospital, so there's a transportation cost involved too. Comparatively, disposables are now often a much more cost-effective option.

But the cost factor isn't the only advantage of disposables. With re-usable instruments, damage is occasionally a problem – for example, tweezers may be misaligned and scissors may be blunt or even broken. If the damage isn't picked up before use, this can cause complications half way through a procedure. Another advantage of disposables over re-usables is that a tight stock control system is needed when kits and instruments are being couriered to and from a clinic to be autoclaved, whereas disposables are only ever kept in one location, making stock control much

simpler. And during transportation from community clinic to hospital for sterilisation, there is, of course, the risk of infection if they touch these 'dirty' instruments.

This year we've observed an increased demand for disposables. The Durbin IUD Fitting Kit is our biggest seller. The brand leader in the UK, put together after a series of consultations with key opinion formers of sexual health practise, contains 1 x field, 1 x gallipot 60ml, 5 x cotton wool balls, 1 long spongeholder, 1 pair of Judd Allis forceps and 1 pair of Currie uterine scissors – all sterile.

As well as an increased demand for disposables generally, hospitals are also asking us to create bespoke kits to meet their own individual requirements. I think this is a brilliant way to reduce wastage and, in turn, maximise resources. We can assemble any combination of disposable instruments and kits – from plastic sponge holders, dilators and speculums to stainless steel forceps, scissors, scalpel blades and scalpels – and deliver to community clinics, hospitals, hospital groups and the Department of Health in any country. There's a minimum quantity order of 1,000 and all bespoke kits have a three-year shelf life.

It's our goal at Durbin PLC to keep up with the changing times so that we can help anyone who ever relies on us to keep up with the changing times too! **MEH**

Durbin PLC is a British company based in South Harrow, London. Established in 1963, the company specialises in supplying quality assured pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and consumable supplies to healthcare professionals and aid agencies in over 180 countries. As well as reacting rapidly to emergency situations, Durbin PLC responds to healthcare supply needs from local project level to national scale programmes.
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