

Bacteriological quality of air in a ward for sterile pharmaceutical preparations

Calidad microbiológica del aire de una unidad de preparados farmacéuticos estériles

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Background: An extremely clean area is required for preparation of sterile pharmaceutical compounds, in compliance with international standards, to minimize the probability of microbial contamination. **Aim:** To evaluate the bacteriological quality of the air in the Sterile Pharmaceutical Preparation Unit of the University of Chile's Clinical Hospital and to set up alerts and action levels of bacterial growth. **Methods:** We studied eight representative sites of our Unit on a daily basis from January to February 2005 and twice a week from June 2005 to February 2006. We collected 839 samples of air by impact in the Petri dish. **Results:** 474 (56.5%) samples were positive; 17 (3.5%) of them had an inappropriate bacterial growth (2% of total samples). The samples from sites 1 and 2 (big and small biosafety cabinets) were negative. The countertop and transfer area occasionally exceeded the bacterial growth limits. The most frequently isolated bacteria were coagulase-negative staphylococci. **Microco**