this guidance to develop specific, institutional preparedness and response plans that will assist in minimizing the impact of future outbreaks, not just of SARS but of any potential infectious disease emergency.

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Medical News

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Are Hospital Surfaces Reservoirs for Nosocomial Infection?

Hota from the University Medical Center, Chicago, reviewed the subject of environmental transmission of infections that originate from the environment. He pointed out that despite documentation that the inanimate hospital environment (eg, surfaces and medical equipment) becomes contaminated with nosocomial pathogens, the data that suggest that contaminated fomites lead to nosocomial infections do so indirectly. Pathogens for which there is more compelling evidence of survival in environmental reservoirs include *Clostridium difficile*, vancomycin-resistant enterococci, and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, and pathogens for which there is evidence of probable survival in environmental reservoirs include norovirus, influenza virus, severe acute respiratory syndrome–associated coronavirus, and *Candida* species. Strategies to reduce the rates of nosocomial infection with these pathogens should conform to established guidelines, with an emphasis on thorough environmental cleaning and use of Environmental Protection Agency–approved detergent-disinfectants.

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