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Evaluating the activity of disinfectants against fungi

By Jim Polarine, Jr., John Macauley, Peter Karanja, Dan Klein, and Abigail Martin, STERIS Corp.

Choose an antimicrobial chemistry that addresses mold isolates specific to your cleanroom operations.

In pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device cleanrooms there is increasing incidence of mold growth, a situation that can lead to environmental monitoring excursions and operation suspensions. Although a facility shutdown is the worst case, frequent isolation of fungi within a cleanroom can indicate a potential reservoir of contamination that can cause ongoing long-term problems.

Many pharmaceutical and biotech companies face challenges in setting acceptable limits for molds in their cleanroom operations. Although a zero limit is unrealistic, the tendency is to set very low levels for molds in most operations in order to minimize future challenges. To keep mold growth below these aggressive target levels, it is essential to choose disinfectants that demonstrate excellent activity against common cleanroom fungi. Fungal spores, like bacterial spores, can present a significant challenge to many commonly used disinfectants. This article presents an overview of common contamination control examples and provides a study of the activity of several disinfectants and sporicides against common fungi found in pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device cleanroom operations.

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