

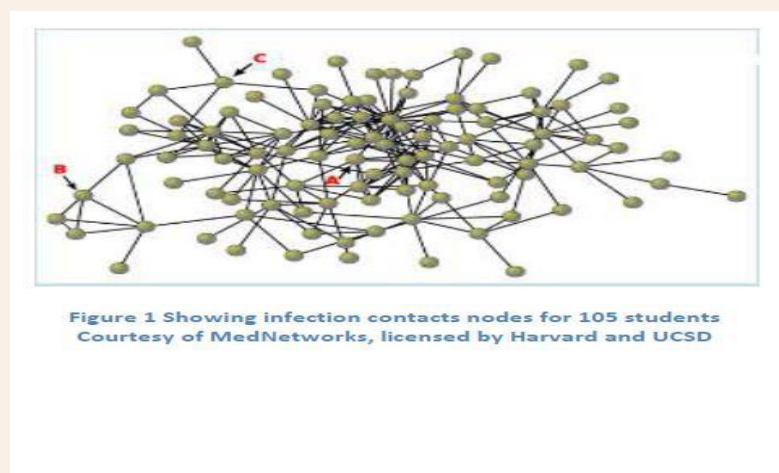
Preventing absenteeism at work

According to the [FT this week, \(Oct 15, 2014\)](#), 130m work days were lost on account of sick leave last years in the UK, with an estimated cost to business of around £32bn. Whilst this figure includes costs associated with absenteeism resulting from back problems and stress, anything that can reduce peer to peer colds and flu contagion in the workplace is positive news for employers.

How does one catch a bug?

When it comes to illness and infection, the spore / infection supply chain is surprisingly simple. One typical scenario is as follows:

- 1, Little Jonny catches a bug at school
- 2, Jonny's dad, catches the bug, but because symptoms take time to appear (1 to 4 days) continues work as normal. Most experts agree that adults with a cold or the flu start being contagious about a day before they start experiencing symptoms.
- 3, Work pressure tends to drive people to work, regardless of coughs, runny noses and sore throat, and thus infection can be fast and immediate.
- 4, If hand washing is lax or human touch points are not antimicrobial, cross- infection can run rampant throughout an organisation, infecting almost everyone in a few days.... Occupiers in offices, transport systems, restaurants; any human contact points are hotspots for spore infection.
- 5, Air conditioning systems further exacerbate the problem by circulating spores throughout offices, staff canteens, etc.



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Solution

- 1, Protect all surfaces with a natural antimicrobial five day+ coating. Biofluids are excellent. They can be added once weekly to the normal cleaning process, and should include all human touch points.
- 2, Where appropriate, apply a fix to the air conditioning ducts. It is a simple fix, a [UV Light apparatus](#) fitted to the air duct to disinfect all air circulated throughout the building.
- 3, Apply [photocatalytic lighting](#) to eradicate airborne infection when upgrading lightbulbs in areas of high risk: loos, public areas, canteens, etc.
- 4, Incorporate [air purification systems](#) at facility level to increase staff welfare, reduce bacterial count and help remove VOCs that can cause sick building syndrome.
- 5, When back problems are an issue, investigate the use of [Far Infra Red \(FIR\) Heat Pads](#) for accelerated recovery.



Keeping work areas safe is a priority for any business. Investment in creating healthy work environments to reduce staff illness from peer to peer infection is perhaps one of the greatest returns on the balance sheet to date unexplored.

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About the author:



Dermott Reilly is passionate about making technology deliver. He worked in the food sector for many years where he had hands on experience of wastage and inefficiency in that sector. Over the last decade Dermott spearheaded a number of projects where emerging technologies helped improve business and quality of live. Dermott has four patents registered and helps companies drive innovative projects forward. He is Training Manager EMEA for RFID4U and Strategic Consultant for emerging technologies.

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