

The following letter from ASGE President Kenneth R. McQuaid, MD, FASGE, was sent to the Editor of the Los Angeles Times in response to an article about a study of scope cleaning at one site.

To the Editor:

The January 31 article about the effectiveness of cleaning methods for medical scopes left out several facts that are important for patients to know.

This article was based on a small study of a few medical scopes at one center in Minnesota in 2015. Some of these scopes appeared to be extremely worn, making them more difficult to clean. This is not typical for a center doing gastrointestinal procedures. At the time of the study, information about optimal infection control related to scopes was evolving. Today, all centers should be keenly aware of this issue thanks to serious efforts at the national level to research, recognize and address all known aspects of infection control related to scopes.

The American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) has been working together with government agencies and other organizations to ensure that hospitals, healthcare professionals and infection control experts know and comply with the latest findings and recommendations to ensure patient safety. Last month, with the endorsement of 10 other organizations, ASGE released extensive updated guidelines for optimal cleaning, disinfection, and replacement of scopes used for our patients.

As the article pointed out, there were no infections associated with the studied scopes. Indeed, available evidence suggests that infections related to gastrointestinal endoscopy are rare. But even one case is one too many. We will continue to partner with government agencies, manufacturers and the healthcare community to tackle this important patient safety issue.

Sincerely,

Kenneth R. McQuaid, MD, FASGE
President
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