

Question on Notice
No. 523
Asked on 7 August 2013

DR DOUGLAS asked the Minister for Health (MR SPRINGBORG)-

QUESTION:

Will the Minister explain why the steriliser used in the Department of Oral Health at the Royal Children's Hospital was not serviced for two years and consistently failed load testing, yet instruments processed in the unit were used on very sick children?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Gaven for his question.

I can advise that during the week commencing 19 July 2010, an oversight regarding the annual validation of the steriliser at the Children's Oral Health Service was detected. The steriliser had not been validated during 2009/2010. The Centre for Healthcare Related Infection Surveillance and Prevention (CHRISP) was notified and arrangements were made for a trained technician to undertake validation testing. A validation test was performed on 21 July 2010, which confirmed that the steriliser was functioning within the approved parameters of sterilisation and that this was supported by all the data in the steriliser log sheets.

Validation is a quality assurance process and part of a number of similar processes undertaken to ensure sterilisers are functioning to the appropriate level to ensure the instrument is sterile at point of use.

The testing on 21 July 2010 confirmed the steriliser had been operating within the approved parameters, indicating the steriliser had been functional since the last validation test in 2008.

From 24 June 2008 to 21 July 2010, the sterilising indicators, log sheets and steriliser print outs confirmed instrument sterilising was achieved.

During the time between 24 June 2008 and 21 July 2010, routine preventive maintenance was regularly undertaken on the steriliser. If a sterilising load failed, the load was reprocessed to ensure that all the sterilising parameters were met. I can confirm that no patient or staff member was placed at risk. Since 21 July 2010, regular validation and maintenance of the steriliser has occurred.