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NEW BIOGUARD™ ANTIMICROBIAL WOUND DRESSING WITH ADVANCED NIMBUS® TECHNOLOGY

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2009 CLINICAL SYMPOSIUM ON ADVANCES IN SKIN AND WOUND CARE



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Abstract

FDA has recently cleared the novel BIOGUARD antimicrobial dressing featuring a permanently bound microbicide that provides long lasting microbial suppression in the dressing, generating an effective barrier to the transmission of pathogens. This technology assures the safest possible wound bed environment, and incorporates several features to prevent bacteria from becoming resistant. BIOGUARD dressings were shown to be effective against common wound pathogens, and demonstrate the highest possible level of biosafety, by standard ISO biosafety tests, and by rigorous testing in mammalian cell models. This novel combination of efficacy, biocompatibility and safety relative to bacterial resistance offers a new cost-effective choice for caregivers to provide their patients with a barrier dressing suitable for prophylactic measures against nosocomial infections.

Background

The dangers of bacterial colonization in wounds are well understood by caregivers – particularly because compromised surfaces are the primary point of vulnerability for the patient. BIOGUARD antimicrobial barrier dressings optimize efficacy and safety to provide caregivers the ability to safely apply the dressings prophylactically to help prevent pathogen transfer. Other currently available antimicrobial dressings act by leaching antimicrobial agents into the wound bed (see section on Zone of Inhibition and **Figure 2**). This approach is successful in reducing wound colonization, but released small antimicrobial molecules may select for bacterial resistance, cause skin discoloration / reaction, or impede wound healing (Wang et al, 2009; Silver et al, 2003; Van Den Plas et al., 2008). Additionally, the cost of many current antimicrobial dressings keeps them out of reach of many patient populations for regular use. BIOGUARD dressings were designed to provide an antimicrobial barrier technology that is effective, economical, and safe enough for broad application.

Mechanism of Antimicrobial Activity

The BIOGUARD antimicrobial barrier dressing is based on the patented NIMBUS® technology (Quick-Med Technologies, Inc.). The active antimicrobial agent is permanently bound to the dressing surface, and acts on the wound pathogen by physically disrupting the prokaryotic cell wall. Electron micrographs (**Figure 1**) show *Escherichia coli* cells before and after contact with a BIOGUARD. The left panel shows healthy intact cells, while the right panel shows disrupted and lysed cells—deflated membrane sacs with their intracellular contents released. This process does not rely on the agent entering the cell: the physical size of the polymeric antimicrobial precludes entry into the cell, even if the polymer were not permanently bound to a solid surface. Lysis of the cells is induced from outside, preventing bacterial cells from being able to generate resistance to the antimicrobial polymer, as all known resistance mechanisms are cellular adaptations to small internalized agents – either through efflux mechanisms or re-routing of metabolic pathways (Poole, 2002).

The macromolecular agent responsible for the BIOGUARD mode of action is poly(diallyldimethylammonium chloride), or polyDADMAC, a cationic quaternary ammonium polymer. Polycationic agents combine broad-spectrum antibacterial activity with relatively low toxicity, allowing use in contact lens cleaning solutions (Hibbard, 2005), topical antimicrobial preparations (Kramer et al, 2004; Daeschlein et al, 2007) and in wound dressings (Lee et al, 2004). The most similar molecule currently used in wound dressings is PHMB (PolyHexaMethylene Biguanide); the main important difference being that the polyDADMAC molecule is approximately 100 times larger. This molecular size difference is important because the level of toxicity to eukaryotic cells induced by cationic biocides is directly related to the size of the molecular chain (Ikeda, 1991; Gilbert and Moore, 2005).

Testing Summary

Test Type	Test Method	Result for Bioguard
Antimicrobial Efficacy	AATCC method 100-1998: "Antibacterial Finishes on Textile Materials, Assessment of"	Strong antimicrobial efficacy (>99.99% for common wound pathogens, see table at right for more data)
Cytotoxicity	Agar diffusion overlay method, as per ASTM F895-84	Lowest cytotoxicity score possible in test: Non-cytotoxic per test evaluation
Cytotoxicity	Direct Contact method with L929 cell line, per ASTM F813-07	Non-cytotoxic per test evaluation
Dermal Irritation	Primary Skin Irritation as per ISO 10993-10 guidelines	Lowest irritation score possible in test: evaluated as Negligible Irritant
Dermal Sensitization	Repeated Patch Derma Sensitization per Buehler Method.	Lowest sensitization score possible in test: evaluation was no sensitization observed
Zone of Inhibition	Inhibition test on <i>E. coli</i> plate	No growth on or under dressing, no visible inhibition away from dressing surface
Bacterial Resistance	Antimicrobial efficacy of step-wise adapted survivor cultures	Antimicrobial efficacy of the BIOGUARD dressing did not change over 10 iterations of step-wise adapted cultures
Bacterial Resistance	Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC) of step-wise adapted survivor cultures	MIC of BIOGUARD active for <i>E. coli</i> did not change over 10 iterations of step-wise adapted cultures

Zone of Inhibition

The BIOGUARD dressing is different from other antimicrobial dressings in that it does not have a zone of inhibition (**Figure 2**). The bound antimicrobial protects the dressing without leaching any chemical agents, and therefore nothing cytotoxic that could retard healing enters the wound bed. Also, the absence of a leached agent ensures the absolute minimum possibility for bacteria to develop resistant strains.

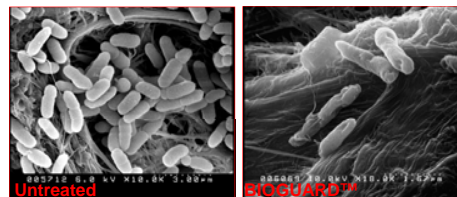


Figure 1 (left). Scanning Electron microscope images of *E. coli* on untreated gauze wound dressing and on BIOGUARD wound dressing (as labeled). *E. coli* bacteria grown in contact with control substrate had intact membranes and full rod shapes. *E. coli* exposed to BIOGUARD surfaces show clear membrane damage and altered general morphology. Some bacteria show small holes and indentations with exuding intracellular content.

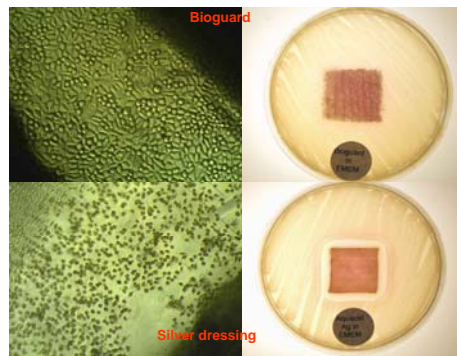


Figure 2 (left). Direct contact cytotoxicity tests and zone of inhibition plates (*E. coli*) for BIOGUARD and for a silver dressing. BIOGUARD (top) shows no zone of inhibition, and direct contact testing with L929 fibroblast cell line shows normal healthy growing cells. The silver dressing shows a zone of inhibition where the chemical leaches out of the dressings: the effect of leached silver is shown in the direct contact assay by malformed and depopulated cells.

Antimicrobial Testing

Wound pathogen	ATCC # for pathogen	Average % kill vs. untreated control, overnight
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	ATCC 6538	99.999992%
MRSA (Methicillin resistant <i>S. aureus</i>)	ATCC BAA-44	99.999998%
<i>Staphylococcus epidermis</i>	ATCC 12228	99.999997%
<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	ATCC 15442	99.999999%
<i>Enterococcus faecium</i>	ATCC 19434	99.999987%
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	ATCC 8937	99.999997%
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	ATCC 15597	99.999998%
<i>Acinetobacter baumannii</i>	ATCC 19606	99.999999%
VRE (Vancomycin resistant <i>Enterococcus faecium</i>)	ATCC 51299	99.999991%

Safety and Biocompatibility

BIOGUARD dressings were exhaustively tested for safety and biocompatibility. Direct dermal testing included skin irritation and sensitization, showing no irritation or sensitization. Sensitive *in vitro* models were used to assess cytotoxicity by multiple methods, including not only agar diffusion but also direct contact testing on fibroblast cell lines, showing that BIOGUARD impeded cellular growth no more than negative controls, while a silver dressing showed significant cytotoxicity in the same assay. Testing of step-wise adaption for 10 iterations showed that bacteria did not increase resistance to the BIOGUARD dressing.

Conclusions

The BIOGUARD dressing demonstrated high efficacy against common wound pathogens, while maintaining the highest possible level of biosafety. This is most clearly illustrated by Zone of Inhibition testing: the lack an inhibitory zone confirms that BIOGUARD antimicrobial barrier dressing is able to control pathogens in the dressing without exerting a physiological effect on the wound bed. A silver dressing tested alongside showed a zone of inhibition, and showed retardation of cells in mammalian cell models. Since the BIOGUARD antimicrobial barrier dressing is shown to be able to fulfill its protective function without impeding cells relevant to wound healing, and without causing concern over bacterial resistance it is safe enough to be used broadly as a prophylactic device to protect vulnerable patients and wounds from infection without adding risks for the patient.

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