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## An assessment of cleaning technique using swabbing procedures

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A swabbing exercise was carried out within 35 outlets of a UK-based supermarket retailer over a 7-month period. The visits were unannounced and conducted on normal working days. The purpose was to check whether the swabs would pass the recommended values, in order to give an indication of whether cleaning techniques were effective and frequent enough. A Hygiena System Sure Plus Luminometer was used for the exercise together with Ultra Snap Surface ATP Test swabs. Swabbing was carried out on counters where open raw and ready to eat food products were served to customers. A total of 1108 swabs were taken. For each counter one touch point (hand contact surface), two fixed surfaces and two pieces of moveable equipment was swabbed. When a swab failed a staff member was asked to clean the surface using their normal procedure. If the swab failed again the cleaning method was checked closely, and suggestions made. There were 281 swab fails, just

over 25% of the total. 38% of touch point swabs failed, 26% of fixed surface swabs failed and 19% of moveable equipment swabs failed. 51 swabs failed a second time after cleaning. It was observed that this was due to a number of factors: the two stage cleaning technique not being followed with an over-reliance on sanitiser only, lack of agitation to release dirt and dirt being smeared onto the surface from surrounding areas. A clean cloth was used in all cases. Results improved after using detergent with equipment that would allow agitation. A re-evaluation of cleaning technique is needed by food safety professionals. Just smearing dirt around is not cleaning!

### Speaker Biography

Paula Mitton is the managing director of Five Star Hygiene and Safety Limited at UK. She works for the encouragement of food safety and hygiene.

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