Technical Information Report

AAMI TIR39:2009/(R)2022

Guidance on selecting a microbial challenge and inoculation sites for sterilization validation of medical devices

AAMI
Advancing Safety in Health Technology

Guidance on selecting a microbial challenge and inoculation sites for sterilization validation of medical devices

Approved 3 September 2009 and reaffirmed 19 October 2017 and 31 October 2022 by
AAMI

Abstract: This technical information report provides guidance on selecting the appropriate form of microbial challenge to use in a validation process and the appropriate inoculation sites for that microbial challenge.

Keywords: microbial, validation, inoculation, biological indicators, SAL

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Published by

AAMI
901 N. Glebe Road, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22203
www.aami.org

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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-1-57020-363-3

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Glossary of equivalent standards

International Standards adopted in the United States may include normative references to other International Standards. For each International Standard that has been adopted by AAMI (and ANSI), the table below gives the corresponding U.S. designation and level of equivalency to the International Standard. NOTE: Documents are sorted by international designation.

Other normatively referenced International Standards may be under consideration for U.S. adoption by AAMI; therefore, this list should not be considered exhaustive.

International designation	U.S. designation	Equivalency
IEC 60601-1:2005	ANSI/AAMI ES60601-1:2005	Major technical variations
IEC 60601-1-2:2007	ANSI/AAMI/IEC 60601-1-2:2007	Identical
IEC 60601-2-2:2009	ANSI/AAMI/IEC 60601-2-2:2009	Identical
IEC 60601-2-4:2002	ANSI/AAMI DF80:2003	Major technical variations
IEC 60601-2-19:2009	ANSI/AAMI/IEC 60601-2-19:2009	Identical
IEC 60601-2-20:2009	ANSI/AAMI/IEC 60601-2-20:2009	Identical
IEC 60601-2-21:2009	ANSI/AAMI/IEC 60601-2-21:2009	Identical
IEC 60601-2-24:1998	ANSI/AAMI ID26:2004/(R)2009	Major technical variations
IEC 60601-2-47:2001	ANSI/AAMI EC38:2007	Major technical variations
IEC 60601-2-50:2009	ANSI/AAMI/IEC 60601-2-50:2009	Identical
IEC 80601-2-30:2009	ANSI/AAMI/IEC 80601-2-30:2009	Identical (with inclusion)
IEC 80601-2-58:2008	ANSI/AAMI/IEC 80601-2-58:2008	Identical
IEC/TR 60878:2009	ANSI/AAMI/IEC TIR60878:2003	Identical
IEC/TR 62296:2009	ANSI/AAMI/IEC TIR62296:2009	Identical
IEC 62304:2006	ANSI/AAMI/IEC 62304:2006	Identical
IEC/TR 62348:2006	ANSI/AAMI/IEC TIR62348:2006	Identical
IEC/TR 80002-1:2009	ANSI/IEC/TR 80002-1:2009	Identical
ISO 5840:2005	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 5840:2005	Identical
ISO 7198:1998	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 7198:1998/2001/(R)2004	Identical
ISO 7199:2009	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 7199:2009	Identical
ISO 8637:2004	ANSI/AAMI RD16:2007	Major technical variations
ISO 8638:2004	ANSI/AAMI RD17:2007	Major technical variations
ISO 10993-1:2009	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-1:2009	Identical
ISO 10993-2:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-2:2006	Identical
ISO 10993-3:2003	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-3:2003/(R)2009	Identical
ISO 10993-4:2002 and Amendment 1:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-4:2002/(R)2009 and Amendment 1:2006/(R)2009	Identical
ISO 10993-5:2009	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-5:2009	Identical
ISO 10993-6:2007	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-6:2007	Identical
ISO 10993-7:2008	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-7:2008	Identical
ISO 10993-9:1999	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-9:1999/(R)2005	Identical
ISO 10993-10:2002 and Amendment 1:2006	ANSI/AAMI BE78:2002/(R)2008 ANSI/AAMI BE78:2002/A1:2006/(R)2008	Minor technical variations Identical
ISO 10993-11:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-11:2006	Identical
ISO 10993-12:2007	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-12:2007	Identical
ISO 10993-13:1998	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-13:1999/(R)2004	Identical
ISO 10993-14:2001	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-14:2001/(R)2006	Identical
ISO 10993-15:2000	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-15:2000/(R)2006	Identical
ISO 10993-16:1997	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-16:1997/(R)2009	Identical
ISO 10993-17:2002	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 10993-17:2002/(R)2008	Identical
ISO 10993-18:2005	ANSI/AAMI BE83:2006	Major technical variations
ISO/TS 10993-19:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO TIR10993-19:2006	Identical
ISO/TS 10993-20:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO TIR10993-20:2006	Identical
ISO 11135-1:2007	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11135-1:2007	Identical
ISO/TS 11135-2:2008	ANSI/AAMI/ISO TIR11135-2:2008	Identical

International designation	U.S. designation	Equivalency
ISO 11137-1:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11137-1:2006	Identical
ISO 11137-2:2006 (2006-08-01 corrected version)	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11137-2:2006	Identical
ISO 11137-3:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11137-3:2006	Identical
ISO 11138-1: 2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11138-1:2006	Identical
ISO 11138-2: 2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11138-2:2006	Identical
ISO 11138-3: 2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11138-3:2006	Identical
ISO 11138-4: 2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11138-4:2006	Identical
ISO 11138-5: 2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11138-5:2006	Identical
ISO/TS 11139:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11139:2006	Identical
ISO 11140-1:2005	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11140-1:2005	Identical
ISO 11140-3:2007	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11140-3:2007	Identical
ISO 11140-4:2007	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11140-4:2007	Identical
ISO 11140-5:2007	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11140-5:2007	Identical
ISO 11607-1:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11607-1:2006	Identical
ISO 11607-2:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11607-2:2006	Identical
ISO 11737-1: 2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11737-1:2006	Identical
ISO 11737-2:1998	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11737-2:1998	Identical
ISO 13408-1:2008	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 13408-1:2008	Identical
ISO 13408-2:2003	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 13408-2:2003	Identical
ISO 13408-3:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 13408-3:2006	Identical
ISO 13408-4:2005	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 13408-4:2005	Identical
ISO 13408-5:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 13408-5:2006	Identical
ISO 13408-6:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 13408-6:2006	Identical
ISO 13485:2003	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 13485:2003	Identical
ISO 14155-1:2003	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 14155-1:2003/(R)2008	Identical
ISO 14155-2:2003	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 14155-2:2003/(R)2008	Identical
ISO 14160:1998	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 14160:1998/(R)2008	Identical
ISO 14161:2009	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 14161:2009	Identical
ISO 14708-3:2008	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 14708-3:2008	Identical
ISO 14708-4:2008	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 14708-4:2008	Identical
ISO 14937:2009	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 14937:2009	Identical
ISO/TR 14969:2004	ANSI/AAMI/ISO TIR14969:2004	Identical
ISO 14971:2007	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 14971:2007	Identical
ISO 15223-1:2007 and A1:2008	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 15223-1:2007 and A1:2008	Identical
ISO 15225:2000 and A1:2004	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 15225:2000/(R)2006 and A1:2004/(R)2006	Identical
ISO 15674:2009	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 15674:2009	Identical
ISO 15675:2009	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 15675:2009	Identical
ISO 15882:2008	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 15882:2008	Identical
ISO 15883-1:2006	ANSI/AAMI ST15883-1:2009	Major technical variations
ISO/TR 16142:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO TIR16142:2005	Identical
ISO 17664:2004	ANSI/AAMI ST81:2004	Major technical variations
ISO 17665-1:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 17665-1:2006	Identical (with inclusions)
ISO/TS 17665-2:2009	ANSI/AAMI/ISO TIR17665-2:2009	Identical
ISO 18472:2006	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 18472:2006	Identical
ISO/TS 19218:2005	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 19218:2005	Identical
ISO 22442-1:2007	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 22442-1:2007	Identical
ISO 22442-2:2007	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 22442-2:2007	Identical
ISO 22442-3:2007	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 22442-3:2007	Identical
ISO 25539-1:2003 and A1:2005	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 25539-1:2003/(R)2009 and A1:2005/(R)2009	Identical
ISO 25539-2:2008	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 25539-2:2008	Identical
ISO 81060-1:2007	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 81060-1:2007	Identical
ISO 81060-2:2009	ANSI/AAMI/ISO 81060-2:2009	Identical

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Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation

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This technical information report (TIR) was developed by the AAMI Microbiological Methods Working Group under the auspices of the AAMI Sterilization Standards Committee. Working Group approval of the TIR does not necessarily imply that all committee members voted for its approval.

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Foreword

This technical information report was developed by the AAMI Microbiological Methods Working Group under the auspices of the AAMI Sterilization Standards Committee.

Manufacturers of medical devices labeled as sterile have the responsibility to validate processes for the sterilization of their products. In the case of medical devices that are labeled as reusable and intended to be reprocessed, the written instructions for sterilization must also be validated.

The objective of this TIR is to provide medical device manufacturers information on the appropriate microbial challenge to use in sterilization validation processes, the selection of appropriate inoculation sites for that challenge, and the means to qualify a method for liquid inoculation.

As used within the context of this document, “should” indicates that among several possibilities, one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required, or that (in the negative form) a certain possibility or course of action should be avoided but is not prohibited. “May” is used to indicate that a course of action is permissible within the limits of the technical report. “Can” is used as a statement of possibility and capability. Finally, “must” is used only to describe “unavoidable” situations, including those mandated by government regulation.

AAMI and ANSI procedures require that standards be reviewed every 5 years and, if necessary, revised to reflect technological advances that may have occurred since publication.

The concepts incorporated in this technical information report should not be considered inflexible or static. This technical report, like any other, must be reviewed and updated periodically to assimilate progressive technological developments. To remain relevant, it must be modified as technological advances are made and as new data come to light.

Suggestions for improving this TIR are invited. Comments and suggested revisions should be sent to Technical Programs, AAMI, 901 N. Glebe Road, Suite 300, Arlington VA 22203.

NOTE—This foreword does not contain provisions of AAMI TIR39:2009, titled *Guidance on selecting a microbial challenge and inoculation sites for sterilization validation of medical devices*, but it does provide important information about the development and intended use of the document.

Introduction

The objective of studies designed to validate a sterilization process is to provide data showing that the sterilization method and process parameters are capable of producing the desired sterility assurance level (SAL). Most often, this can be achieved through inoculation with biological indicators placed in various difficult-to-sterilize, accessible locations on or in the medical device during the validation studies. In other situations, placement of biological indicators in the appropriate locations is not possible. In those cases, a microbial challenge may be directly inoculated onto the device using a liquid suspension. The objective of studies designed to validate a sterilization process is to provide data showing that the sterilization method and process parameters are capable of producing the desired Sterility Assurance Level (SAL). A number of AAMI documents mention this direct inoculation approach or provide protocols for these types of studies, or do both (e.g., ANSI/AAMI/ISO 14161:2009 and ANSI/AAMI ST55:2003/(R)2008).

This document provides further guidance on factors to be considered in choosing the form of microbial challenge and its placement on or in the product.

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Guidance on selecting a microbial challenge and inoculation sites for sterilization validation of medical devices

1 Scope

1.1 General

This technical information report (TIR) provides guidance for selecting the appropriate type of microbial challenge to use in a sterilization validation process, the selection of appropriate inoculation sites, and the methods for inoculation and recovery of inoculated microorganisms from these sites.

1.2 Exclusions

1.2.1 The recommendations in this TIR are addressed to manufacturers of medical devices for sterilization validation testing and are not intended as guidance for routine or field testing of device sterilization.

1.2.2 This TIR does not cover microbial challenges or inoculation processes used for validation of cleaning or disinfection of medical devices.

2 Normative references

The following referenced document is indispensable for the application of this document. The latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies. Members of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11737-1, *Sterilization of medical devices—Microbiological methods—Part 1: Determination of a population of microorganisms on products.*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this TIR, the following definitions and abbreviations apply.

3.1 bioburden: Population of viable microorganisms on or in product and/or sterile barrier system.

[ANSI/AAMI/ISO TIR 11139:2006]

3.2 biological indicator: Test system containing viable microorganisms providing a defined resistance to a specified sterilization process.

[ANSI/AAMI/ISO TIR 11139:2006]

3.3 establish: To determine by theoretical evaluation and confirm by experimentation.

[ANSI/AAMI/ISO TIR 11139:2006]

3.4 health care product: Medical device, including *in vitro* diagnostic medical device, or medicinal product, including biopharmaceutical.

[AAMI/ISO TIR 11139:2006]

3.5 inoculated carrier: Supporting material on or in which a defined number of viable test organisms have been deposited.

[ANSI/AAMI/ISO 11138-1:2006]

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