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**3 WAYS THAT MACERATOR
BLOCKAGES IMPACT ON
THE ROLE OF CLINICIANS**



In 2013, the University Hospitals of Leicester dealt with around seven calls a day for pipes and drains to be unblocked ¹

Not only was this a sinkhole for the hospital's budget, but the impact on patient care was significant. Areas would frequently be closed for maintenance and cleaning, reducing access to much-needed facilities and adding extra pressure elsewhere.

Mostly caused by the flushing and [maceration of unsuitable items](#) (such as syringe caps, baby wipes and even plastic cutlery), the misuse of equipment was spread between staff, visitors and patients alike.

Considering that many hospitals are also dealing with extremely old pipes (in very old buildings), the infrastructure of medical facilities simply isn't one that can easily cope with breakdowns in plumbing; especially when hygiene is so critically important.

When it comes to protecting patients from HCAs, we know that [macerator](#) access is vital, in order to safely dispose of pulp bedpans, and other single-use human waste vessels.

But what about clinicians? How are they affected when a macerator is blocked and out of action?

1. Physical Health

Your patients aren't the only ones at risk when a macerator is waiting for repair.

When forced to use a less effective waste disposal method (such as [cleaning bedpans by hand](#), or piling pulp products into yellow bags), your clinicians are increasing their exposure to dangerous pathogens. Naturally, this increases the risk of them falling ill with an HCAI themselves.

Aside from the fact that many infections are deeply unpleasant to endure (C. difficile, for example), taking sick days from work can also have an impact on the individual's finances, as well as that of the hospital who must find alternative staffing.

In the case of no alternative staffing being available (or affordable), the clinicians who remain on the ward must bridge the gap – often to their own detriment, in terms of time and stress. The patients, also, will not necessarily benefit from the same level of care when the ward is short-staffed.

Similarly, a clinician who may not yet be displaying symptoms is likely to still be working with patients; this can result in a spread of infection to the vulnerable, before the facility even notices.

2. Productivity

When their conveniently-located macerator [breaks down](#), clinicians will need to find another; often located in a different area of the medical facility. If another macerator isn't close enough, it'll be a hasty retreat to bagging and binning pulp items, usually after disposing of waste in a sluice room slop hopper.

Both of these actions will be damaging to the productivity of clinicians, who will spend extra time making sure their waste disposal process is still hygienic.

This time will often be taken from what was usually spent providing valuable bedside care; another way in which patients will suffer from the lack of efficient waste management.

¹ <https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/aboutus/our-news/press-release/centre/?entryid8=23265>

3. Mental Wellbeing

When using a macerator for safe waste disposal is no longer an option, it can be a very stressful time for staff, who are likely to feel exposed to new occupational hazards.

Not only will they likely endure more unpleasant tasks (such as physical bedpan cleaning), but they will be aware of the sanitation compromise, and the risk to their own health therein. It's simply not an enjoyable environment to work in.

Similarly, one of the primary reasons a clinician will choose their profession is because they want to provide good standards of interpersonal care.

When the time spent with patients is decreased, so is job satisfaction. Cleaning bedpans is no comparison to time spent by the patient's side; and when clinicians know they're not providing the best possible service, despite their best efforts, it can be devastating for morale.

The knock-on effect of this negative working environment can leave clinicians tired, anxious and unable to perform at their optimum. All in all, it's a dire consequence to what could simply be regarded as a blocked machine.

The impact of macerator downtime can be reduced when you take out a service and maintenance contract with DDC Dolphin.

Not only can our technicians [service any brand of machine](#) (including most legacy and discontinued models), but we employ the largest service fleet in the UK, ensuring that the help you need is always available when you need it.

While essential maintenance will get your macerator back in action quicker than ever, a planned service schedule will ensure that preventable downtime is significantly reduced. In addition, DDC Dolphin can [provide training to your workforce](#), ensuring that they're equipped with the best possible operational knowledge to stem breakdowns through misuse.

Save money, save time, save clinician and patient wellbeing.

Keen to find out more? [Contact DDC Dolphin](#) today.

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