

Challenge

The Varberg Hospital in Sweden has used Getinge equipment for many years, much to the satisfaction of the staff. In 2013, as part of an equipment upgrade project, the departmental management was considering replacing two of its four washer-disinfectors. The two units were approaching the end of their lifespan and required long running cycles. Getinge's sales rep presented a new design that featured four new 88 Turbo units. In response, the departmental manager suggested modernizing the entire sterilization unit and replacing the existing installation, which would also open up new organizational possibilities.

The semi-automatic solution the hospital had in place previously required staff to move around between the units, and only two wash-carts could queue up simultaneously at each machine, providing space for only one of them when unloading. The manual handling was a physical strain and cumbersome, and special hearing protection was required due to the noisy environment.

»Before, many people didn't want to work in the wash room at the sterilization unit, as it was physically wearing and very noisy. Now that's not an issue anymore.«

Lena Dahlgren, Chief Engineer Practical Nurse, sterilization unit, Varberg Hospital

Benefits



Relief of multiple ergonomic stressors

Staff no longer have to push around the carts themselves after loading, glass walls around the loading/unloading areas provide acoustic protection, and the automatic distribution of detergents, CMS, reduces the need to lift heavy containers and avoids spillage.



Increased safety

Thanks to the ergonomic advantages, lowering the risk of physical strain or crush injuries, reducing staff absences.



Improved operations

as an equal workload between washers saves time and allows staff to concentrate on their core tasks. The automation system automatically detects when a unit is at the end of a running cycle, which has been reduced by 30 minutes with the new 88 Turbo Washer-Disinfectors, and prepares a new load in advance.

Solution

During the tender process, Getinge organized a study visit, which included demonstrations and video simulations of its latest automation solution: the Air Glide System (AGS) 2.0, for fully automated loading and unloading of the washer-disinfectors. Lena Dahlgren, Chief Engineer Practical Nurse of the sterilization unit at Varberg Hospital, recalls that it was at this point that the project team really became interested. Financing for the new solution came through at exactly the right time so that Varberg Hospital could enjoy the world première of the AGS 2.0 version, even though construction had to be postponed until summer, when clinical operations slowed down to the point where they could manage the building phase with a relocation of three of the old washer-disinfectors to a provisional site within the building. Frequent communication with all the departments that would be

affected as well as vigilant supervision and smooth interventions by Getinge technicians helped prevent inconveniences and quickly overcame all start-up problems, and the brand new installation was ready by October 2014.

Two half-day training sessions by Getinge Academy prepared all staff to use the new equipment. Following the training, staff were very enthusiastic about the new working conditions. Now that everything is running smoothly, the drying cabinets are next in line to be replaced at Varberg Hospital, and preparations are underway to provide Hallands Hospital in Halmstad, another hospital within the Halland region, with a set-up that will replicate the Varberg installation as closely as possible.



Thanks to one loading and unloading point, staff no longer has to push around the carts between four washer-disinfectors.



Lena Dahlgren, Chief Engineer Practical Nurse, sterilization unit, Varberg Hospital:

»My manager has asked me to help with any future projects relating to sterilization operations in the Halland region. Based on my experience with this project, I would be glad to do so.«