Background
Following a growing number of hospitals around the world, WSSK Hospital, located in Wroclaw, south-west Poland, has implemented antimicrobial copper surfaces in its Nephrology Ward. The aim is to use the antimicrobial properties of copper in order to reduce the number of bacteria contaminating the most frequently-touched surfaces - such as door handles, bed rails and call buttons - that can cause serious infections amongst patients.

Decision
Professor Wojciech Witkiewicz, the Hospital Director, was keen to reintroduce copper into the hospital environment as he recalled his early days at another hospital furnished with equipment made of copper including toilet seats, hand rails and mixing bowls. ‘This may be the answer to the recently observed increase in drug resistant strains found in hospitals,’ he observes.

Installation
WSSK Hospital is a modern facility with highly-qualified staff, offering modern operational techniques and high standards of treatment and care. The hospital is the centre for both medical and research activities in many specialities such as vascular surgery, transplantation, oncology, adult and paediatric cardiology, angiology, anaesthesiology, nephrology, urology, ophthalmology, ENT, gynecology and obstetrics. Over 150 medical doctors work at the hospital including Professor Witkiewicz, Hospital Director and world-class surgeon.

The following surfaces were upgraded to antimicrobial copper:

- Door handles
- Grab rails in bathrooms, showers and toilets
- Shower seat in a disabled bathroom
- Bathroom mat
- Toilet seats and flush handles
- Free-standing and bed-mounted IV poles
- Treatment trolleys
- Bed rails
- Light switches
- Ballpoint pens.

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