



**THIERRY CROUZET
CLEAN HANDS SAVE LIVES**

FOREWORD Dr. MARGARET CHAN, WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL
SIR LIAM DONALDSON, WHO PATIENT SAFETY ENVOY

You may not know it, but an innovation has made our world a better place. The use of alcohol-based handrubs protects us from infectious diseases and saves millions of lives each year through safer health care.

Here is the story of this revolutionary formulation, made available without patent and offered as a gift to humanity by Professor Didier Pittet and his team at Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG). From bush doctors to giant pharmaceutical corporations, everyone can now produce effective handrubs, cheaply and easily.

Didier Pittet's medical odyssey has taken him to the four corners of the Earth. It also reveals a new path open to human society, one that promises a radical shift from a predatory economic system to an economy of peace.

"WHO is fortunate that Didier Pittet said "yes" when the call went out for his help. [...] Much can be learned from the story that is told so well and so inspirationally in this book."

Dr. Margaret Chan,
Director-General, World Health Organization

Thierry Crouzet — blogger, essay writer, and novelist — is fascinated by contemporary issues located at the nexus of technology, politics, and literature. A former journalist, his published works in French include *Le Peuple des connecteurs* [*The Connected People*], a premonitory reflection on our networked society; *J'ai débranché* [*How I Unplugged*], a tale of digital burnout; and *La Quatrième Théorie* [*The Fourth Theory*], a political techno-thriller.

Save lives, join our project at CleanHandsSaveLives.org!

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**L'ÂGE
D'HOMME**

PRESS RELEASE - APRIL 2014

Every year hospital-related infections kill 16 million patients. A Swiss doctor is reducing these numbers by half. His crusade is recounted in a book that promises to be a major event. Translated into seven languages, it is being published by Editions L'Âge de l'Homme to mark the occasion of World Hand Hygiene Day on 5 May 2014.

A very simple procedure is saving the lives of 8 million patients each year throughout the world: disinfecting hands using alcohol-based handrubs. It has perhaps already saved your life, or that of a loved one. We owe the existence of this procedure to Professor Didier Pittet, who has revolutionized the fight against nosocomial illnesses.

Since 2005, in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO), he has been leading a global campaign in which 170 out of 194 UN member states now take part.

Didier Pittet was made Commander of the British Empire (CBE) by Queen Elizabeth II in 2007. Today, his name is being mentioned as a possible candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.

This fascinating book, translated into seven languages (French, English, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, and Chinese), with a foreword by the WHO's Director-General, tells of an ongoing worldwide struggle against engrained habits, prejudices, and ignorance. It's a lesson of courage, hope, and peace.

The author has donated his rights to the Clean Hands Save Lives Fund, hosted by the Fondation Philanthropia. By purchasing a copy of this book, you are providing a health care worker in a disadvantaged nation with a bottle of alcohol-based handrub, and you are helping to save lives.

Press contacts **L'ÂGE
D'HOMME**

Switzerland: Christine Déonna – cbetrisey@bluewin.ch / +41 78 738 88 60
France: Suzanne Jamet – sujamet@aol.com / +33 1 55 42 79 79
International: Séverine Hutin – severine.hutin@gmail.com / +41 79 342 48 69

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More info about infections

Statistics

Nosocomial infections are illnesses acquired during health care.

- At least 500,000 patients are infected each day throughout the world. 20 to 50,000 die as a result.
- Nosocomial illnesses kill more than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined.
- In the West, they are the second biggest cause of mortality, tied with cerebrovascular accidents (CVA, or strokes).
- In the USA, they kill 200,000 persons each year. The equivalent of a 747 airliner crashing every day.
- 770,000 French men and women contract infections each year. 40,000 of these prove fatal.
- In Switzerland, the number of persons affected is estimated at 70,000 per year, leading to 2,000 deaths.

Milestones

1992: Didier Pittet calculates that, using soap and water, a health care worker must spend 22-44 minutes per hour washing his or her hands in order to avoid contaminating patients.

1993: In his hospital, he replaces handwashing at a sink with disinfection by means of alcohol-based handrub, which destroys 99.9% of bacteria in just a few seconds.

1995: He demonstrates that the introduction of this new strategy has reduced the number of infections, and thus the related deaths, by 50%.

2000: Publication of these results in the scientific magazine, *The Lancet*.

2005: The WHO launches its world campaign for patient safety. The globalization of the strategy employing alcohol-based handrub is its spearhead.

2006: The formula for the handrub solution is made public. Patent-free, it can be produced at cost price in all the countries of the world, using local resources.

At present, 170 of the 194 member states of the United Nations have joined the campaign, which covers 80% of the world population.

More info about the author

A French blogger, essay writer, and novelist, born in 1963. An avowed commonist, he defends the cause of an economy of peace, based on giving as opposed to predatory economics and its patents. In *Clean Hands Save Lives*, he is pursuing his study of various individuals, often unfamiliar to the wider public, who are changing our world. He has notably published *Le Peuple des connecteurs* [The Connected People], a premonitory reflection on our networked society; *J'ai débranché* [How I Unplugged], a tale of digital burnout; and *La Quatrième théorie* [The Fourth Theory], a political techno-thriller.

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More info about the subject

Born in 1957 in Geneva, Didier Pittet is a Swiss professor of medicine, an expert on the prevention of infections and on patient safety at Hôpitaux universitaires de Genève. Within WHO, he has been leading a worldwide campaign since 2005 to make alcohol-based hand disinfection an international standard of health care. He is also an Honorary Professor of Imperial College (London), Hong Kong Polytechnic University School of Health Science (Hong Kong) and First Medical School of the Fu (Shanghai).

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