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A REVIEW OF THE CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN DEVELOPING PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO COMBAT INFESTATIONS OF *CIMEX LECTULARIUS* (HETEROPTERA: CIMICIDAE) IN COMMERCIAL ACCOMMODATION ENVIRONMENTS

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Abstract Having started working exclusively with bed bug infestations in 2005 and taking a unique science and fact lead approach to extermination we have always used the data produced in our work to refine the methods we use and to develop better processes. Initially focused on educational and raising understanding within our client's organisations we quickly realised the flaws in this approach, which by 2009 this led to the creation of Passive Monitors for bed bugs taking our services to the hospitality industry from a purely reactive offering to one that is proactive and capable of dealing with infestations before they are able to develop and spread. While this has given us a viable tool to base solutions upon there have been significant challenges in the implementation of programs within a diverse range of hospitality providers from high end hotels through to hostels and residential care facilities. Through constant review and feedback, we have identified a number of key obstacles that must be overcome in the implementation of any successful program from the overcoming of natural entomophobia, the culture of pests being someone else's problem to deal with and the involvement of senior management. Having tackled 100% infested hotels (50+ rooms) through to entire student campuses (500+ rooms) we have established optimal detection parameters for different profiles of accommodation providers which can be adapted as the level of exposure risk changes while maintaining a foundation level of quality assurance. This review is best understood when presented as a timeline that illustrates when the challenges were first encountered, anticipated and overcome, from the changes in insecticide availability, emergence of widespread resistance through to the development of ProActive disciplines and green treatment solutions. The current conclusions to these projects have been that bed bugs continue to develop to treatment strategies and that without feedback and continual modification reactive solutions quickly fail.