

STANDARD DEVIATIONS: Dressed for Success

Greetings,

Looking for that perfect costume for Halloween? It shouldn't be that hard to come up with something. After all, we dress up every time we work on the bench.

We put on a costume of PPE daily. Gloves, lab coat, safety glasses, and all to **avoid** being scared. Perhaps your position requires even more disguise. Are you wearing shoe covers? A face protector? Maybe you're in a PAPR or N95, or in scrubs headed into an OR for a bone marrow aspirate? A costume for frightening kids doesn't seem much of a stretch.

What scares me, are the folks who think that proper PPE to address risk of a lab acquired infection is not part of their wardrobe. We use these protections because they've been shown to prevent infection and transmission of pathogens among lab staff. Misuse or disregard of PPE jeopardizes the worker, his/her co-workers, and their family and maybe even the goblins knocking on the door.

Keeping that costume in working order is another trick we need to watch out for. Changing gloves often, replacing soiled lab coats and maintaining a clean work space all treat us to a sweeter work environment.

Spills, splashes, drips, stringy mucoid boogers, overfilled tubes, dropped plates and slides, you see every possible way that pathogens try to get at you on the bench. Our PPE is the thin line between safety and being sucker-punched by some bad bug. PPE is so simple to use, so readily available, and so easy to abuse. Being dilligent and consistent is much harder, but a habit of good PPE technique can become second-nature if you value that protection.

Enjoy your Halloween. Pick out the best candy from your kids' stash with the comforting knowledge that the costume you doffed at the end of your shift allowed you to answer the door as a safe lab scientist and not some zombie.





Yours, truly!

Have a great week and be safe,
Bryan





*“I just want something that says ‘scientist’
without being so... obvious.”*

