

CHALLENGES OF HAND WASHING COMPLIANCE IN AN INPATIENT REHAB SETTING



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INTRODUCTION

Hand hygiene is the most important measure to avoid the spread of harmful germs and to prevent health care-associated infections. Lack of hand hygiene is a major source of germ transmission within the healthcare setting. Thousands of people die every day of infections acquired while receiving health care.

Hand washing compliance is a major challenge for all healthcare settings. However, compliance rarely exceeds 40% (Widmer 2000). When our unit was audited by the Ohio Health Department in August 2012 and we received our results, we identified strategies to improve compliance with hand hygiene.

CHALLENGES

- Ohio Health Department August 2012 Secret Shopper audits revealed poor Hand Hygiene compliance on our unit. Unit population includes stroke and general rehabilitation patients
- Patients travel to multiple sites every day including:
 - Therapy
 - Cafeteria
 - Medical Appointments
 - Community Outings
 - Pet Therapy
 - Dav Passes
- Shared patient rooms and bathrooms
- ❖Multi-disciplinary staff hand hygiene non-compliance
- Patient, family and visitor lack of education about standard precautions and hand hygiene
- Staff reluctance to use hand sanitizer because of it's drying effect

STRATEGIES



- Hand washing signs posted on patient unit room doors, bathrooms, and staff common areas.
- Change in hand sanitizers and addition of compatible hand lotion installed in staff common areas
- Installation of hand sanitizers outside each patient's room and on the wall beside each patients bed.
- Implementation of a "Hand Hygiene Tag Zone". Similar to a "game of tag", the staff member being hand hygiene non-compliant would wear a "wash your hands" button and pass it on.
- Increased education for patients, families and visitors (verbal, handouts, and demonstration)
- Pocketsize hand sanitizers available for staff, patients, and families

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- Multi-disciplinary hand hygiene audits were completed by all levels of staff, which also provided education about our hand hygiene compliance.
- On-going feedback for staff on hand hygiene audits and improving compliance.
- Party for staff when our unit hit 100% compliance with hand hygiene audits.



I wash my paws between each patient, do you?

CONCLUSION

In the span of one year, our unit went from being one of the lowest in hand hygiene compliance to 100% compliance with the implementation of our strategies and support and encouragement from our managers and each other.

REFERENCES

- *Widmer AF (2000) Replace hand washing with use of a waterless alcohol hand rub? "Clinical Infectious Diseases", 31, 136-43
- Creedon SA (2003) Healthcare workers hand decontamination practices: Compliance with recommended guidelines "Journal of advanced nursing" 51(3), 208-216