



World Alliance for Patient Safety

Global Patient Safety Challenge 2005/2006 “Clean Care is Safer Care”

International Consultation on Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings

3 December 2004

Background

Healthcare-associated infection is a major, global issue of patient safety as it affects millions of people worldwide and complicates a significant proportion of patient-care deliveries. Infections add to the burden of resource use, promote resistance to antibiotics, and contribute to unexpected patient deaths. Hand hygiene remains the primary measure to reduce infection and the spread of antimicrobial resistance, but healthcare workers' adherence to good practice is extremely low. Risk factors for the lack of adherence to hand hygiene have been identified. Adherence must be multimodal and include staff education and motivation, the use of performance indicators, and a strong commitment by stakeholders (e.g. hospital management, community leaders). A system change must be addressed in most healthcare settings where alcohol-based hand disinfection has not become standard of care. Hand hygiene, a very simple action, results in reduced infection rates and enhanced patient safety across all settings, from advanced healthcare systems to local dispensaries in developing countries.

Background to meeting

WHO launched a World Alliance for Patient Safety on 27th October 2004. The fundamental purpose of the Alliance will be to facilitate the development of patient safety policy and practice in all WHO member states. Each year the Alliance will deliver a number of work programmes covering systemic and technical aspects of patient safety. A key programme for the Alliance is the delivery of a "Global Patient Safety Challenge". The topic chosen for the first challenge is healthcare-associated infections and the title of the challenge is "*Clean Care is Safer Care*". The intention will be to examine a number of existing WHO strategies and guidelines in the areas of infection prevention, blood safety, procedure-related safety, equipment safety and others, in order to develop a comprehensive and integrated WHO strategy for hand hygiene. Initially, closely-monitored implementation of the integrated strategy will take place in six geographical districts, one in each WHO region, to assess its impact.

Objectives for 2005

- Designate hand hygiene in health care settings as a patient safety priority worldwide.
- Initiate clinical governance for hand hygiene promotion at all levels of healthcare settings.
- Develop comprehensive hand hygiene in health care settings promotion guidelines that include: staff education and motivation to promote behavioural modification facilitation of system changes, use of performance indicators, and engagement of stakeholder support .

- Issue recommendations and develop instruments for continuous, long-term monitoring and feedback mechanisms, as well as outcome measures, to monitor progress.

Objective of international consultation

The objective of the consultation is to review available evidence on hand hygiene and to reach consensus on the outline of the WHO *Guidelines on Hand Hygiene*. The Consultation will also designate working groups to research specific topics in hand hygiene within the next six months.

Venue

WHO Headquarters, Geneva. Salle B. 8:30- 17:30

Participants

Professor Didier Pittet, University of Geneva Hospitals, Switzerland, has agreed to champion this challenge for WHO and has prepared draft guidelines for international consultation. Participants will include representatives from eight WHO departments and two regional offices. Representatives from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, USA, Health Protection Agency, UK, International Confederation of Midwives, International Council of Nurses and the National Patient Safety Agency, UK will attend this meeting along with international technical experts from universities in Australia, Austria, Brazil, Hong Kong, India, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, UK, and USA.

Structure of meeting

The meeting will begin with plenary sessions on the Global Patient Safety Challenge and the WHO *Guidelines on Hand Hygiene*. Short presentations will be made on methods to evaluate the efficacy of hand hygiene products, hand hygiene promotion at country-wide level, and religious and cultural aspects of hand hygiene. Following these, there will be working sessions to debate various aspects of hand hygiene such as definitions of healthcare settings, population-specific issues, reality in the field for the education of healthcare workers, the introduction, distribution and maintenance of products, and public information. At the end of the meeting, consultative task force working groups will be set up to research specific topics in hand hygiene.

Outcome of the Consultation

The Consultation will result in an agreed outline of the draft *guidelines* and a work programme for the participants involved in developing the guidelines.

Timetable

It is intended that the final *guidelines* be published by May 2005.