

## **The Health Professional in the Prevention of Hospital Infections**

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### **Abstract**

This study presents the current recommendations related to the preparation of professional staff and discusses the role of the health service in the control of hospital infection. The goal is from the literature, to rescue the biosafety guidelines and prevention of cross infection within the hospital environment, proposing interventions through training, in the professional's actions that allow reducing the proliferation of microorganisms in hospital.

Key words: hospital infection; health care; cross infection; preventive measures.

### **Introduction**

In this 21st century, a new scenario in medicine is observed, as a result of the great scientific and technological advance. However, the increasing recognition of new infectious agents and the resurgence of infections, which until recently were presumably controlled, also characterize this new phase.

Hospital infection (HI) is one of the major problems faced by health professionals and patients. Recognized as the infection that is neither incubated nor present at the admission of the patient to the institution, but the risk of microorganisms propagation is present throughout the hospitalization period, circulating between the physical plant, equipment, supplies and in the hands of professionals who provide health assistance.

The World Health Organization<sup>(9)</sup> has recognized (HI) as a worldwide concern due to its negative impact on patients, professionals and health institutions in developed and underdeveloped countries<sup>(7)</sup>.

HIs are complications related to health care and are the main cause of hospital morbidity and mortality, causing harm to users, the community and the State. These infections pose a major problem for patient safety, as well as complications to their care and contribute to patient incapacitation, promote resistance to antibiotics and generate additional costs for patients.

The participation of professionals in the control of HI has also been decisive in the processes of accreditation of institutions, since these are directly related to the quality factor. Recent studies have demonstrated the need of health professionals to perform a reassessment of the practices used to control environmental contamination. The confirmation of the importance of the controllers to the teams of continuing education in several institutions proves significantly the reduction of HI cases in several topographies and consequently the search for the quality of care<sup>(5)</sup>.

### **Literature Review**

The present study was developed using as methodology the literature review. The bibliographical research is developed from material already elaborated, constituted mainly by scientific articles, besides texts divulged by magnetic and electronic means.

The literature review presents as an advantage the possibility of getting to know the topic in depth, without researching it directly. For the accomplishment of the study it was followed as reference sources, the database accessed by BIREME, and internet search sites (GOOGLE SCHOLAR), using the keywords: health professional; Hospital infection, cross infection and preventive measures.

Library research has taken place in literary works, scientific journals and texts that relate to the subject, through selective reading.

When reviewing the scientific literature, one can face with high HI rates, so it is of fundamental importance that health professionals in general can offer debates, training, professional training, and dissemination of information, prevention and control measures.

HI's emerged in the medieval period, when institutions were set up to house patients, pilgrims, the poor and the disabled, and constituted places of exclusion and discrimination, facilitating the transmission of infectious diseases<sup>(9)</sup>.

HI's are complications that occur in patients after their hospitalization, with a prolonged hospitalization period of 5 to 10 days, which ends up increasing expenses due to diagnostic procedures and antibiotics that have a high cost. In Brazil, it is estimated that 5% to 15% of hospitalized patients contract some HI. The knowledge of the transmission mechanisms, together with the expansion of laboratory diagnostic resources, outlined objective measures for the control.

The main means of prevention include hand hygiene, isolation of communicable diseases and specific measures for each site of infection. Hand hygiene is an important preventive measure, and depends not only on the adherence of health care professionals, but also on the structural adequacy of health care establishments (RDC No. 50 2002), so the availability of the necessary resources for this practice is more of an incentive to join<sup>(3)</sup>.

The protocols recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the state, federal and institutional departments make clear all the processes to be followed in relation to biosafety for both the patient and the employees, unfortunately so uncorrected and even trivialized in some services of Health care<sup>(7)</sup>.

In a recent study, authors demonstrated the need of health professionals working in infection control to perform a reevaluation of the practices used to control environmental contamination<sup>(2)</sup>. The responsibility to prevent and control HI is individual and collective, but the success of the program will depend on the attachment of all professionals involved in providing hospital care.

Professionals adhere to a program of control when they understand their bases. Therefore the education of the personnel is a fundamental element of an effective work.

Clearly written guidelines, guidelines and procedures ensure uniformity, efficiency and effective coordination of activities and educational materials must be appropriate in content and vocabulary according to the educational level, schooling and language spoken by the collaborator<sup>(1)</sup> (APECIH - Guidance for Control Of Infections, 2008).

The diversity and volume of information is extremely challenging even for experienced professionals and lifelong learning is the appropriate tool to avoid this gap between referrals and clinical practice<sup>(4)</sup>.

### **Final Considerations**

During literature review research, it was observed that great scientific and technological advances occurred and, nevertheless, HI continues to constitute a serious threat to the safety of hospitalized patients, contributing to raise morbidity and mortality rates, as well as length of hospital stay<sup>(5)</sup>.

With the progress of technologies applied in modern medicine, the survival of our patients has increased significantly. The burden of this achievement is the increased risk and opportunities for HI acquisition.

Contrary to what people think, HI's are not necessarily fruits of poor quality hospital care.

However, the control of infections cross-checked by health professionals starts with a planning of the infection controllers, based on the references and evidences of daily life, orientation activities, awareness and the tireless process of multiplication of the capacities,

addressing the two faces of the coin: patient-related prophylaxis, and worker biosafety, greatly reducing the incidence of health-care-related infections<sup>(6)</sup>.

Health professionals should serve as role models, demonstrating best practices to prevent transmission of infections from health care, a term that will soon replace hospital infections.

An effort in any collaborative system is necessary to ensure an effective infection prevention program.

It is believed that the subject HI needs to be addressed not in conformist but reflective and critical way, so that we can make important decisions, which will contribute to a less arid future.

However, it should not be forgotten that in order to control and prevent these infections, the members of the CCIH and the entire nursing team and other health professionals must work together<sup>(5)</sup>.

This study emphasized the importance of hand hygiene and reinforced the contribution of the multiprofessional team in the control of HI. It is necessary for the professionals to be responsible and conscientious so that they see the importance of this measure and change their attitude<sup>(8)</sup>.

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