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Effect of Education and Performance Feedback on Handwashing in Two Turkish Hospitals of Istanbul and Ankara

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Background:

Patients admitted to hospitals are at risk of acquiring nosocomial infections. Many peer-reviewed studies show that handwashing (HW) significantly reduces hospital infections and mortality rates. Our objective was to evaluate the effects of education and performance feedback on handwashing compliance before contact with patients in one Intensive care Unit in Public Hospitals of Turkey. We performed an observational study of health care workers (HCW) to measure the effect of education alone plus performance feed-back.

Methods:

Two ICUs, of two public hospitals were studied for adherence to a handwashing protocol. The observed healthcare workers included physicians, nursing personnel, and ancillary staff. Following initial observations to establish baseline rates of HW (phase 1), we evaluated the effect of education plus performance feed-back (phase 2).

Results:

At Ibnisina Hospital phase one was from August 2003 to November 2003, and phase two was from December 2003 to August 2004. At Haydarpasa Hospital, phase one was from October 2003 to March 2004, and phase two was from April 2004 to October 2004. We observed 1614 patient contacts during phase one, and 1816 during phase two. During phase one, the baseline rate of handwashing before contact with patients was 11.95% (193/1614), during phase two, with education and performance feedback, handwashing increased to 43.99% (799/1816) (RR 3.68; 95% CI 3.14 – 4.31; P value: 0.0000).

Conclusions:

In this study, HW policies, education, and performance feedback of the HCW significantly improve worker adherence to the handwashing protocol.