

## **HCAI Newsletter May 2015**

### **Focus useful resources for infection prevention and control**

#### **(i) World Hand Hygiene Day 2015 was 5 May**

The face of Ireland is changing and so too are the types of patients and infections that we are seeing in the community. We look after an increasingly elderly population often with multiple co-morbidities and care for patients whose immune system is compromised due to disease or treatment, and are therefore at greater risk of contracting a healthcare associated infection (HCAI). An additional concern is that many patients in the community may have their skin or bowel colonised with multi-resistant bacteria.



Another interesting point is that 70% of the world is now connected by two airplane flights and Irish people love to travel so we need to consider if returning travellers are infectious and take appropriate measures including hand hygiene to protect ourselves and other patients.

So when you start to think about the many varied patients we see in the surgery, nursing homes and the patient homes we visit, it is easy to see how we may put ourselves or our patients at risk if we or our staff (including cleaning staff) are not careful about infection prevention and control measures.

Hand hygiene is one of the most effective means of preventing HCAI. Hand hygiene is one of the set of practices known as “standard precautions” that should be used in the care and treatment of all patients, regardless of whether they are known or suspected to be infected with a transmissible organism.

Alcohol rub is the preferred method for performing hand hygiene unless the hands are physically dirty or the patient has diarrhoea.



There are many useful documents and tools to help you improve hand hygiene in your particular community setting. See <http://www.hse.ie/handhygiene>.

**(ii) New general practice section on the HPSC website**



The HPSC website is a fantastic resource but often it can be hard to find what you are looking for and with the help of the HPSC website administrator, Kirsty, I have discovered there are many patient leaflets, short guidance documents, posters and lots of other tools you might find useful. These are now collated on one page for ease of access.

<http://www.hpsc.ie/Publications/InformationforGPsandPrimaryCare/>

The **patient information leaflet section** includes needle stick injuries in the community (useful to parents who find their child in contact with one in a playground), all the superbugs (CRE, VRE, Cdiff, MRSA, EBSL, Hepatitis B, C, Lyme disease), caring for an IV line and lots more.

<http://www.hpsc.ie/Publications/InformationLeafletsfortheGeneralPublic/>

Below is an excerpt from a very useful guidance document on gastroenteritis and its management in the Irish community setting.

Gastroenteritis is a common reason for presentation in general practice. On the island of Ireland, 4.5% of the population present to their GP with gastroenteritis each month. This represents 8,800 episodes of gastroenteritis every day (or 3.2 million episodes per year). Each patient will, on average be unwell for four days. In terms of workload in Ireland and Northern Ireland, this translates into 3,100 GP consultations per day (or 1.1 million per year). Sixty four thousand stool samples will be submitted from the community each year and 1.5 million working days will be lost due to absences related to gastroenteritis (this equates to €173.5 million on the island of Ireland in lost earnings alone). On average, GPs have seven consultations for acute gastroenteritis per week, accounting for 4.5% of all consultations. The importance of gastroenteritis lies in its potential clinical severity coupled with the fact that most gastroenteritis pathogens are contagious, meaning a single case can transmit to many people. The great majority of cases of IID are managed successfully in primary care; such cases have self-limiting and mild illnesses that require no specific treatment.

The full document is available here:

<http://www.hpsc.ie/Publications/InformationforGPsandPrimaryCare/GuidanceforGPandPrimaryCare/File,13527,en.pdf>

### **(iii) Ebola – PPE training video for level 1 and level 2**



Many practising GPs have never received any formal training in infection prevention and control and the importance of knowing the correct procedure for the donning and doffing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where there is a high risk of the HCW contracting a life threatening infection was highlighted last year with the potential threat of exposure to the Ebola virus. The correct procedure for donning and doffing PPE is now available in video format for all use as a training resource.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqR91BLZPKRH5IiV7cdEYnzeS97xg9h6K>

Other Ebola information for GPs is available here:

<http://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/Vectorborne/ViralHaemorrhagicFever/Ebola/EbolaInformationforGeneralPractitioners/>

**(iv) What infection prevention training should your general practice/primary care team members receive?**

The HCAI AMR clinical care programme has approved a national core IPC skills set for healthcare workers. Individual GPs may find this useful in assessing what training they need to consider for their particular setting.

It defines which core knowledge and skills are required for different groups of healthcare staff. This document categorises staff for the first time in Ireland, by the degree of contact with patients and/or blood or body fluids and thereafter sets out the core recommended knowledge and skills required to enable staff to adopt best IPC practices in their area of work.

This is short document with a comprehensive table on page 10 which summarises the core skills for each team member:

[http://www.hse.ie/eng/about/Who/qualityandpatientsafety/safepatientcare/HCAIProgramme/HCAI\\_Documents/CoreInfectionPreventionandControl.pdf](http://www.hse.ie/eng/about/Who/qualityandpatientsafety/safepatientcare/HCAIProgramme/HCAI_Documents/CoreInfectionPreventionandControl.pdf)

The 2013 Infection Prevention and Control for Irish Primary Care contains useful guidance on important aspects of IPC for general practice settings. See

<http://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/MicrobiologyAntimicrobialResistance/InfectionControlandHAI/Guidelines/File,14612,en.pdf>.

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