Barriers to Residents' Pre-Meal Hand Hygiene: A Survey of Nursing Facility Staff

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Introduction

- Hand hygiene is emphasized among medical professionals as a key component of infection control[1]
- Less attention is paid to patient or resident hand hygiene, especially in elderly individuals
- Elderly residents of skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) are at increased risk of infection[2]
- Identifying barriers to resident hand hygiene could guide focused interventions
- We hypothesized that staff would identify multiple significant barriers

Aims and Objectives

- Identify major barriers to residents' pre-meal hand hygiene from staff perspective through surveying

Laboratoires Servier. *Hygiene – Hand washing.* SMART-Servier Medical Art. Wikimedia Commons. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

Methods

Staff (n= 62) of two nursing facilities in Southeast, MI were surveyed

Responses were grouped into low (0-2) versus high (3-5) ratings for analysis

Exploratory post-hoc comparisons between certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and other nursing staff were made with Chi-square tests

Results

- Majority of SNF staff did not perceive any major barriers to residents' pre-meal hand hygiene
- Most frequently identified barrier was job burnout followed by irritating or drying agents, staff prioritization of resident needs, and forgetfulness of residents

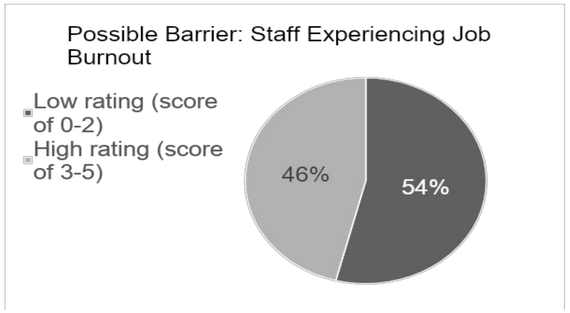

Figure 1. Proportion of SNF staff (n=61) reporting low (0-2) versus high (3-5) ratings for job burnout as a potential barrier to residents' pre-meal hand hygiene.

Post-hoc comparisons

- Other nursing staff were significantly more likely than CNAs to rate two factors as high-level barriers

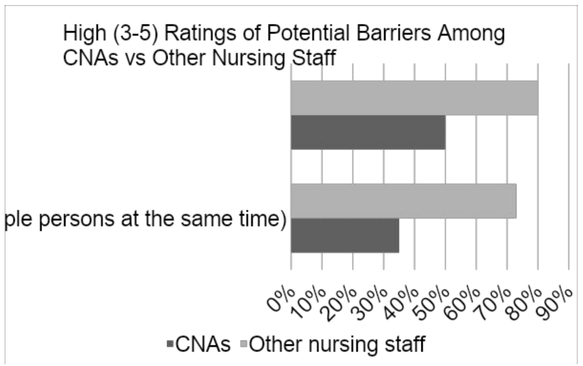

Figure 2. Proportion of high (3-5) ratings for insufficient time and cross-contamination risk among CNAs vs other nursing staff. Differences were statistically significantly different ($p < 0.5$)

Conclusions

- These findings suggest that most staff perceive resident pre-meal hand hygiene as feasible
- However, targeted interventions addressing job burnout, time constraints and workload may further support resident pre-meal hand hygiene practices
- Limitations include modest sample size, non-validated survey tool and potential recall or social desirability bias
- Direct observational studies are needed to evaluate real-world resident hand hygiene practices and associated barriers

References

1. World Health Organization. WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care: First Global Patient Safety Challenge Clean Care Is Safer Care. World Health Organization; 2009.
2. El Chakhtoura NG, Bonomo RA, Jump RLP. Influence of Aging and Environment on Presentation of Infection in Older Adults. *Infect Dis Clin North Am*. 2017;31(4):593-608. doi:10.1016/j.idc.2017.07.017

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