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Improving hand hygiene in a low resource setting: A nurse-led quality improvement project

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Hand hygiene is a simple but often ignored practice in health care systems worldwide, but it is integral for nosocomial infection prevention, with many hospital acquired infections being linked to inadequate hand hygiene practice. At the burns unit in Kamuzu Central Hospital, 50% of patients were found to have acquired pseudomonas infections: one of the contributing factors being inadequate hand hygiene. This quality Improvement project was part of a course for nurses to introduce change for patient benefit, with the aim of increasing the baseline figures for hand hygiene practices and hand hygiene facilities from 37% and 22% respectively (baseline collected in November 2019). Using robust, standard QI processes, measures were put in place such as checklists to observe hand hygiene compliance and facilities, appointment of a hand hygiene committee who monitored and sustained activities of the project, procurement and distribution of handrub and placement of hand washing buckets and soap at strategic points. The project saw an increase in availability of hand washing facilities to 95.6% and hand hygiene practices increase to >80% within 6 months. The project demonstrates that low cost interventions, led by nurses, can make a real difference to practice in resource poor countries.

Recent publications

1. Kamanga P, Ngala P, Hebron C. Improving hand hygiene in a low-resource setting: A nurse-led quality improvement project. *Int Wound J.* 2022 Mar;19(3):482-492.
2. Nejad SB, Allegranzi B, Syed SB, Ellisc B, Pittet D. Health-care-associated infection in Africa: a systematic review. *Bull World Health Organ.* 2011;89:757-765.
3. Nambiar B, Hargreaves DS, Morroni C, et al. Improving health-care quality in resource-poor settings. *Bull World Health Organ.* 2017;95:76-78.

Speaker Biography

Patricia Kamanga is a PhD candidate at Southern Medical University majoring in public health. Patricia graduated from Kamuzu College of Nursing with a Bachelor's degree in Nursing. She started working Kamuzu Central Hospital, Malawi in 2009 as a nursing officer taking charge of orthopaedic and surgical ward. In 2014 she was promoted to senior nursing officer for burns unit and female surgical ward. In 2019 she was promoted to principal nursing officer for burns unit and surgical department. In 2017 she completed her master's degree in public health from College of Medicine. In 2019, she was awarded a scholarship by the Chinese government to pursue a doctorate degree in public health at Southern Medical University. As a nurse working in burns unit she conducted a quality improvement project on hand hygiene among health workers.

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