

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Are awareness strategies effective in improving adherence to hand hygiene in health care?

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The practice of hand hygiene is a simple, quick, easy, but very important technique in infection prevention and control. The hands of health care professionals are one of the main vehicles of microorganism transmission in healthcare settings because they are in constant contact with patients, materials and equipment. However, despite the several scientific evidence and legal provisions, it is clear that many of the teams do not adopt the Brazilian and international recommendations in their daily practices. Knowledge of techniques, reasons and consequences of the lack of a correct habit does not change conducts. In Brazil, adherence to this practice remains low, averaging 40%.<sup>1</sup> This result only depicts the difficulty and complexity of the problems in our country. Special attention by managers, educators and infection control agents to encourage and raise awareness has become an emergency. In spite of the Brazilian laws, especially the 2616 Decree of May 12, 1998, which regulates and establishes minimum actions to be developed in order to reduce the incidence of healthcare-related infections, leaving to Infection Control Committees the responsibility of developing educational activities and physical structure actions to meet these requirements, few have produced positive effects, but one should not be discouraged.

The Control of Infection and Epidemiology Commission, from Hospital Santa Cruz, constantly develops educational / recreational actions aiming to improve hand hygiene, promoting the safety of patients, professionals and service users. Annually, the month of May is chosen for the promotion of a hand hygiene campaign aiming to raise awareness of good practices and recall our focus on patient safety.

In the year 2012, other tools were used to reach each institution professional: (1) visits during all shifts, recalling the technique through activities with tempera paint and blindfold, (2) incentive to use creams moisturizers, it induces

hand washing, (3) standardization of a mouse-pad to recall hand hygiene and their responsibility regarding patient safety, (4) institutional emails, and (5) use of social networks. The activity was carried out in person, in the administrative and assistance sectors of the institution, reaching the nursing, medical and academic staff. Reflection on the theme has been facilitated by providing visualization of process failures and group meditation. A total of 82 approaches were made, 54 in assistance units and 26 in administrative units, totaling 550 people.

Of these, 46 were students and 504 were employees of the institution, totaling 62% of total employees. The use of mouse-pads, that were delivered in the units and messages by email institutional, ensured the visualization by the entire group.



An institutional video about hand hygiene has also been developed to implement the practice, which is available on the hospital's website at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/HospitalSantaCruzRS?feature=watch>. Good receptiveness by the groups has been observed, especially in relation to the development of playful dynamics and curiosity on how to sanitize them, as well as the distribution of mouse pads for work platforms. We encourage the teams to think about hand hygiene in their daily practice and raise the awareness that this basic infection control measure is the duty of each professional, demystifying the sole responsibility of infection control agents.<sup>2</sup>

## REFERENCES:

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