

## THE FIRST GLOBAL PATIENT SAFETY CHALLENGE

### *Clean Care is Safer Care*

#### Summary of the Challenge, Clean Care is Safer Care

- The Global Patient Safety Challenge is a core programme of the World Alliance for Patient Safety.
- The programme addresses over two year cycles a significant aspect of risk to patients receiving health care.
- The topic chosen for the first Global Patient Safety Challenge is health care-associated infection (HAI) and has the theme Clean Care is Safer Care with hand hygiene promotion as the cornerstone, for preventing the transmission of pathogens.

#### The burden of disease caused by HAI

- The burden of disease attributable to health care-associated infection is huge, with hundreds of millions of patients affected worldwide every year. These infections contribute to patient deaths and disability and promote resistance to antibiotics.
- At any time, over 1.4 million people worldwide are suffering from infections acquired in hospital.
- Between 5% and 10% of patients admitted to hospitals in the developed world acquire one or more infections.
- The risk of health care-associated infection in developing countries is 2 to 20 times higher than in developed countries. In some developing countries, the proportion of patients affected by a health care-associated infection can exceed 25%.
- In intensive care, health care-associated infection affects about 30% of patients and attributable mortality may reach 44%.
- In some countries, more than half of the babies housed in neonatal units are affected by health care-associated infection, with a fatality rate between 12% and 52%.
- The infection rate associated with vascular devices among neonates is 3 to 20 times higher in developing than in developed countries.
- Unsafe blood transfusion causes 16 million hepatitis B infections, 5 million hepatitis C infections, and 160 000 cases of HIV worldwide every year.

(Source: The Global Patient Safety Challenge 2005-2006 Clean Care is Safer Care).

#### Key points

##### WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care

The new WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care have been developed in collaboration with experts from research and academic institutions worldwide and technical experts from WHO.

The Guidelines cover:

- scientific evidence related to hand hygiene;
- general recommendations for hand hygiene in health care;
- specific recommendations applicable to different Member States or professional organisations and societies;
- measures of the impact of hand hygiene in different health-care settings;
- advocacy and campaigning to promote hand hygiene.

The advanced draft of the Guidelines are available to Member States to support the implementation of local improvements.

They can be accessed at:

[www.who.int/gpsc/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/gpsc/en/index.html)

Both critical appraisal and informal feedback is being sought on the Guidelines. Member States and organizations are invited to send formal comments using the AGREE instrument (available via the web link above).

## Clean Care is Safer Care - an unprecedented global initiative

- An unprecedented global initiative to tackle health care-associated infection by promoting clean and safe practices.
- Combining efforts across the world to raise the profile of the issue and seek commitment at national level to prioritise the prevention of these infections has the potential to yield huge benefits in terms of patient safety.
- Much can be achieved through the integration and better use of existing interventions to prevent and control infections in health care.
- A number of Member States have succeeded in controlling the problem of health care-associated infection and decreasing the risks to patients in health-care facilities.
- However, in many countries, there is still a gap between the patient safety improvements that are possible and the improvements that are actually being made. The gap can arise because existing tools and strategies are not being implemented wisely and widely enough.
- The Global Patient Safety Challenge brings together the WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care with ongoing actions on blood safety, injection and immunization safety, clinical practices safety, and water, sanitation and waste management safety. Simple actions contained in these low-cost strategies have proven very effective in reducing the burden of health care-associated infections.
- Hand hygiene, a very simple action, remains the primary measure to reduce health care-associated infection and the spread of antimicrobial resistance.

## How the Global Patient Safety Challenge works

The Global Patient Safety Challenge supports countries as they set priorities to address health care-associated infection. It is part of a drive to place clean care at the heart of infection control and patient safety.

Implementation of the Global Patient Safety Challenge is comprised of three major strategies:

- **Awareness-raising:** global and national campaigns, initiated with the launch of the Global Patient Safety Challenge, to raise awareness of the impact of health care-associated infection and the role of hand hygiene in prevention, and to catalyse commitment
- **Country commitment:** ministers of health and major associations of health professionals are invited to participate in this initiative, by committing to tackle health care-associated infection, to give priority to hand hygiene in health care, and to share results and learning internationally.
- **District Testing:** work in six pilot districts will examine the implementation of the WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care and the other four components of the Global Patient Safety Challenge relating to:
  - a. **Clean Products** - blood transfusion safety
  - b. **Clean Practices** - surgical and emergency procedure safety
  - c. **Clean Equipment** - injection safety
  - d. **Clean Environment** - Safe water, sanitation and waste management
- Further information for countries wanting to respond to the Challenge or share information on their own work in this area, is available via the website of the Global Challenge [www.who.int/gpsc/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/gpsc/en/index.html)

*This is Information sheet 1 in a series of 7 related to the Clean Care is Safer Care Challenge  
The leaflets are based on the WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care (Advanced Draft)*

*For further information about Clean Care is Safer Care, please contact the Secretariat of the World Alliance for Patient Safety,  
e-mail: [patientsafety@who.int](mailto:patientsafety@who.int) or for a full list of tools visit: [www.who.int/gpsc/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/gpsc/en/index.html)*

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