

Key messages for hospital infection prevention and control professionals and hospital epidemiologists

Tasks

1. Your task is to ensure that the fundamental elements of the hospital infection prevention and control programme are carried out [82,84,85] [expert consensus]. These include:
 - a) education and training,
 - b) policies and procedures,
 - c) aseptic techniques and clinical interventions,
 - d) hand hygiene,
 - e) decontamination of instruments and equipment,
 - f) decontamination of the environment,
 - g) water safety,
 - h) vaccination of healthcare workers alongside occupational health,
 - i) liaising with public health organisations,
 - j) embedding infection prevention and control in all policies, and
 - k) ensuring, from the board level to the ward, that all staff understand their role in preventing infections.
2. Other tasks include [31,42,56,82,85-87]:
 - a) Coordinating hospital surveillance and prevention and control programmes of healthcare-associated infections;
 - b) Ensuring infection prevention and control guidelines, protocols and checklists are available for preventing both healthcare-associated infections and transmission of microorganisms
 - c) Sharing information on local microbiology and antibiotic resistance patterns;
 - d) Monitoring compliance with infection prevention and control guidelines;
 - e) Auditing and reporting healthcare-associated infections surveillance data;
 - f) Ensuring antibiotic stewardship programmes are integrated with policies and programmes for infection prevention and control;
 - g) Educating all relevant healthcare professionals on infection prevention and control interventions to reduce the transmission of both antibiotic-resistant and antibiotic-susceptible bacteria.

Example

3. *Greece – A three-year multifaceted infection control programme to control the spread of carbapenem-resistant bacteria in a haematology unit of a tertiary care hospital led to fewer infections caused by these bacteria [88].*

4. Italy – A four-year infection control programme decreased the incidence of infections and colonisation caused by carbapenem-resistant bacteria in a teaching

hospital. The programme included antibiotic stewardship measures targeting carbapenem use [62].

5. The ECDC directory (link) contains online resources for prevention and control of healthcare-associated infections.

Thinks you can do

6. Make guidance for infection prevention and control measures to reduce healthcare-associated infections and transmission of microorganisms readily and reliably accessible. This guidance can include guidelines, protocols and checklists [expert consensus].

7. Organise and promote educational events, courses and meetings together with hospital administrators to strengthen infection prevention and control activities among all healthcare professionals (e.g. hand hygiene, contact precautions, active screening cultures, and environmental cleaning) [89].

8. If you see staff members at the hospital or healthcare setting who breaches guidelines or protocols, ask them why they are doing so and provide them with tools to understand what they are doing wrong [69] [expert consensus].

9. Coordinate hospital surveillance of healthcare-associated infection through using both [82,85] [expert consensus]:

- Point prevalence surveys, which give a snapshot picture of the number of patients with healthcare-associated infection in hospital at a particular point in time, and
- Long-term surveillance of the incidence of healthcare-associated infections (e.g. in intensive care units, or for specific infection types).

10. Use local data on healthcare-associated infections, set local targets and find areas where additional infection prevention and control support is needed [82,85] [expert consensus].

11. Monitor how effective targeted preventive measures are at reducing transmission of antibiotic-resistant bacteria [82,85] [expert consensus].

12. Train healthcare professionals regularly on how to implement effective prevention and control strategies [82,85] [expert consensus].