

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Infrequent hand-washing before receiving sterile material in a hospital in Lima-Peru

To the Director: The World Health Organization (WHO) sets the standards for hand-washing using soap and water or a friction procedure using an alcohol-based preparation for hand antisepsis, to avoid and control healthcare-associated infections which represent a safety issue for the patient.^{1,2} However, adherence for this pivotal activity is sometimes lacking in health services.

In a Public Hospital's Sterilization Center in Lima, Peru, we performed direct observation on the hand hygiene (HH) habits in Nurse Technicians from different hospital units (hospitalization and ambulatory services) during a task that must be aseptic – sterile material reception (involving wound management equipment, mechanic ventilation sets, sterile clothing for non-surgical procedures, vaginal specula, etc.) – for three consecutive days in September 2018, and the results are shown. The assessment for every worker included the performance of the eleven steps for the correct hand-washing with soap and water and the eight steps for the correct hand hygiene by friction with an alcohol gel-based preparation as per WHO Guidelines.²

During the observation period, there were 37 Nurse Technicians, 33 of them were female (89.2%), the median age was 57 years old (range: 21-67 years old), the median for working years was 32 (range: 0.5-44 years) and 24 (64.9%) were evaluated in different hospitalization areas. 86.5% of the 37 nurse technicians did not perform any hand hygiene before sterile material reception and just 2 (5.4%) performed a correct hand washing technique (Table 1).

Although, reports on this subject in Peru are not available, low adherence rates (32-48%) to Hand Hygiene Guidelines were reported among physicians and nurse professionals in the Netherlands.³ Another report showed Hand Hygiene non-adherence in 74.6% of nurse technicians, 54.7% of nurse professionals and 82.5% of physicians in Brazil, meanwhile among those who reported good adherence, the technique used was incorrect in 75-86% of the subjects.⁴

It is of utmost importance to stress that the Hand Hygiene Surveillance must be performed by direct observation as reported in a Hospital in Brazil where a difference in adherence was evident between observed adherence (19%) and self-reported adherence (87.9%) among physicians, nurse professionals and nurse technicians.⁵

Finally, our findings show a critical scenario and strongly support previous reports, suggesting that we must enforce through direct observation a rigorous and frequent Hand Hygiene and Hand Washing Technique Surveillance in Health Workers at the Hospital. This action would provide improvement opportunities by means of identifying deficiencies in a timely fashion to lower nosocomial infections rates and ultimately improve patient safety.

Table 1. Hand Hygiene Habits in Observed Nurse Technicians

	Female		Male		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Alcohol gel-Based Preparation						
No	31	93.9	3	75	34	91.9
Yes	2	6.1	1	25	3	8.1
Soap and Water						
No	31	93.9	4	100	35	94.6
Yes	2	6.1	0	0	2	5.4
Hand Hygiene						
Not performed	29	87.9	3	75	32	86.5
Incorrect	3	9.1	0	0	3	8.1
Correct	1	3	1	25	2	5.4

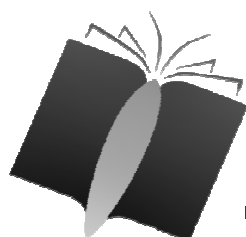
Diana Elizabeth CALLE-JACINTO DE GUILLÉN,^{1,2} Jimmy Henry ÁLVAREZ-MAYORGA,¹ Otto Barnaby GUILLÉN-LÓPEZ¹

¹Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia. Lima, Perú. ²Hospital "Santa Rosa". Lima, Perú

Correspondence: DIANA.CALLE.J@upch.pe

References

- Boyce J, Girard R, Goldman D, et al. Directrices de la OMS sobre higiene de las manos en la atención sanitaria (borrador avanzado): resumen. Organización Mundial de la Salud, 2005; Disponible en: https://www.who.int/patientsafety/information_centre/Spanish_HH_Guidelines.pdf [acceso: 11/09/2019].
- Organización Mundial de la Salud. Manual técnico de referencia para la higiene de las manos. Organización Mundial de la Salud, 2009; Disponible en: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/102537/WHO_IER_PSP_2009.02_spa.pdf;jsessionid=48D0FED412CD63F0420943A923ED95E5?sequence=1 [acceso: 11/09/2019].
- Erasmus V, Daha TJ, Brug H, Richardus JH, Behrendt MD, Vos MC, van Beeck EF. Systematic review of studies on compliance with hand hygiene guidelines in hospital care. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol.* 2010;31(3):283-94. doi: 10.1086/650451.
- Primo MGB, Ribeiro LCM, Figueiredo LFS, Sirico SCA, Souza MA. Adesão à prática de higienização das mãos por profissionais de saúde de um Hospital Universitário. *Rev. Eletr. Enf.* 2010;12(2):266-71. Disponible en: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5216/10.5216/ree.v12i2.7656>.
- Oliveira, AC, Oliveira de Paula A, Sarmento Gama C. Control de la higiene de manos: observación directa versus tasa autorreportada. *Enfermería Global* 2017; 16(4): 324-353. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.6018/eglobal.16.4.277861>.



HEMEROTECA
Cantárida

Más de 1000 documentos publicados al año
www.index-f.com/hemeroteca.php

FONDO DE REVISTAS DE ENFERMERIA Y CUIDADOS DE SALUD
DE LA FUNDACION INDEX

Accede a la hemeroteca digital más importante de la Enfermería en español

23 títulos incluidos en revistas especializadas

Acceso gratuito a suscriptores de Index de Enfermería y abonados a Ciberindex