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New *Journal* articles highlight improving hand hygiene compliance to prevent HAIs

The January 2015 issue of *The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety* includes two articles and an editorial on hand hygiene compliance, which reduces rates of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) in hospitals but has proven difficult to improve on a sustained basis.

In the first article, “Improving Hand Hygiene at Eight Hospitals in the United States by Targeting Specific Causes of Noncompliance,” Mark R. Chassin, M.D., FACP, M.P.P., M.P.H., president and chief executive officer of The Joint Commission, and co-authors provide a detailed account of The Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare’s first patient safety project on hand hygiene. The Center convened teams of experts in performance improvement and infectious diseases from eight hospitals for the project, which was conducted from December 2008 to September 2010. Lean, Six Sigma and change management methods were used to measure the magnitude of hand hygiene noncompliance, assess specific causes of hand hygiene failures, develop and test interventions targeted to the specific causes, and sustain improved levels of performance.

In the second article, “Beyond the Collaborative: Spreading Effective Improvement in Hand Hygiene Compliance,” Dr. Chassin and colleagues chart the development of the Center’s Targeted Solutions Tool® (TST®) for hand hygiene. The tool helps organizations discover the most important, specific causes of hand hygiene noncompliance in their facilities, and target interventions at those causes.

In an accompanying editorial, “Toward More Reliable Processes in Health Care,” Peter Pronovost, M.D., Ph.D., Johns Hopkins Medicine, Baltimore, supports the implementation of using Lean, Six Sigma and change management methods in health care. Dr. Pronovost emphasizes the importance of managers and leaders championing quality improvement processes as a way to manage and lead their health care organizations. The editorial concludes, “In the struggle to find the balance between art and science, patients would be better served if more emphasis was placed on management science.”

*The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety*, available by subscription, is a monthly peer-reviewed publication that promotes the quality and safety of health care. (Contact: Steve Berman, sberman@jcrinc.com)

**Accreditation and certification**

Effective July 1, 2015: New and revised diagnostic imaging standards

New and revised elements of performance (EPs) for accredited hospitals, critical access hospitals, and ambulatory health care organizations that provide diagnostic imaging services (including ambulatory care organizations that have achieved Advanced Diagnostic Imaging certification) have been finalized and will go into effect July 1, 2015. This set of standards was previously announced in January 2014 and would have gone into effect in July 2014. However, The Joint Commission determined that further research and additional revisions were needed.
The new and revised standards incorporate recommendations from imaging experts, professional associations, and accredited organizations about areas that must be evaluated to ensure the safe delivery of diagnostic imaging services. Please note that the proposed requirement that addressed minimum qualifications for technologists performing diagnostic computed tomography (CT) exams remains on hold pending additional research. The new and revised requirements will be published in the E-dition®, and the ambulatory health care, critical access hospital, and hospital accreditation manuals. (Joyce Webb, jwebb@jointcommission.org)

Resources

Joint Commission launches Infection Prevention and HAI Portal
The Joint Commission has merged its two online infection prevention resources into one convenient, expanded tool: the Infection Prevention and Healthcare Acquired Infection (HAI) Portal. The new portal puts information from The Joint Commission, Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare and Joint Commission Resources in one place. In addition, it offers links to other nationally recognized resources on infection prevention issues. Offerings include:
- 2014 “Compendium of Strategies to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections in Acute Care Hospitals”
- The Joint Commission's Ebola Preparedness Resource Web page
- Nationally recognized infection prevention guidelines
- Resources on emerging issues such as influenza and enteroviruses
- Disinfection and sterilization resources
- Resources specific for different or various health care settings

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New on the Web
- 2015 National Patient Safety Goals Presentation
- Emergency Management Resources - Pandemic/Public Health: Considerations for U.S Healthcare Facilities to Ensure Adequate Supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Ebola Preparedness
- Blog post: Ambulatory Buzz: Best Blogs of 2014

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