

PUBLIC REPORTING OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

May 28, 2008

The Ontario government today announced that hospitals will be required to publicly report eight major patient safety indicators, establishing Ontario as an international leader in patient safety. These include:

Clostridium difficile (Sept. 30, 2008)

Clostridium difficile (*C. difficile*) is a bacterium that causes diarrhea and more serious intestinal conditions such as colitis. It is the most common cause of infectious diarrhea in hospitalized patients in the industrialized world.

The use of antibiotics increases the chances of developing *C. difficile* diarrhea. Treatment with antibiotics alters the normal levels of good bacteria found in the intestines and colon. When there are fewer of these good bacteria, *C. difficile* can thrive and produce toxins that can cause an infection. The combination of the presence of *C. difficile* in hospitals and the number of people receiving antibiotics in these settings can lead to outbreaks.

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (Dec. 31, 2008)

Staphylococcus aureus is part of the normal bacteria that many people have and is commonly found on the skin and in the nose. There have been some strains that have become resistant to the most commonly used antibiotics and this has become a problem in many hospitals. MRSA is one of a number of hospital-associated infections.

Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci (Dec. 31, 2008)

Enterococci are bacteria found in the stomach and bowels of about 19 out of every 20 healthy people. They are also found in the vagina, the mouth and the throat, and on skin around the anal area. The bacteria can be present in or on the body, but not cause illness.

Enterococci can get into open wounds and skin ulcers, and cause infection. Less often, they can cause more serious infections of the blood or other body tissues.

Vancomycin is an antibiotic that is used to treat enterococcal infections. Some strains of Enterococci have developed resistance against vancomycin and are said to be Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci (VRE). VRE is one of a number of hospital-associated infections.

Hospital Standardized Mortality Ratio (Dec. 31, 2008)

The Hospital Standardized Mortality Ratio (HSMR) is a measure that provides a starting point to assess mortality rates and identify areas for improvement. When tracked over time, the HSMR indicates how successful a hospital has been in reducing preventable deaths. The HSMR is calculated as the ratio of the actual number of deaths to the expected number of deaths among hospital patients. It's adjusted for other factors affecting mortality such as age, sex and lengths of hospital stay.

Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia (April 30, 2009)

Ventilator-associated pneumonia is a serious lung infection that can occur in patients who need to be on a ventilator. When the ventilator tube that pumps life-saving air into a patient's lungs becomes contaminated, it can act as a pathway for bacteria or secretions to enter the respiratory tract, paving the way to deadly ventilator-associated pneumonia.

Central Line Infections (April 30, 2009)

Some patients who need frequent intravenous medications, blood, fluid replacement and/or nutrition may have a central line placed into one of their veins. Central lines can also be used for the monitoring and testing of the heart and blood. A central line infection occurs when bacteria grows in the lines and spreads to the patient's bloodstream.

Surgical Site Infection Prevention For Hip and Knee Surgeries (April 30, 2009)

The rate of infection after total hip or knee replacement surgery varies depending on the joint involved and the prosthetic implant. A patient's risk of developing an infection after joint replacement depends on several factors including the presence of rheumatoid arthritis and/or diabetes, older age, infection remote to the site of joint replacement, prior surgery, wound complications, and previous infection in the joint replacement. A key component of reliable perioperative care and the reduction of surgical site infection is timely prophylactic antibiotic administration.

Hand Hygiene Compliance (April 30, 2009)

Improving hand hygiene, through the use of soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub, is the single most effective way of reducing the spread of infections.

A multi-faceted hand hygiene program for all Ontario hospitals – called Just Clean Your Hands – was launched in March 2008. The government is providing hospitals with train-the-trainer sessions, tools and materials (including educational CD-ROMs, posters and other visual reminders), an audit process to evaluate the program's impact, and a website for easy access to information and a place for hospitals to share lessons learned. It is designed to highlight the need for all hospital staff to be engaged in rigorous hand washing practices.

Public reporting of hand hygiene compliance among hospital staff will begin being reported on April 30, 2009.