

16 April 2014 Last updated at 20:56 ET

Hospital infection rates must come down, says watchdog

[COMMENTS \(157\)](#)

Doctors and nurses should do more to stop hospital patients developing infections, an NHS watchdog says.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has issued "quality standards" on measures including hand-washing and catheter insertion.

About 300,000 patients develop an infection in England each year while being treated by the NHS.

Prof Gillian Leng, of NICE, said it was unacceptable that rates were still so high.

Rates of MRSA and Clostridium difficile - the most well-known hospital-acquired infections - have fallen significantly in recent years, but one in 16 people treated in the NHS picks up an infection.

'Hinder recovery'

Infections can occur during invasive procedures or when devices such as urinary catheters are fitted, and can then be passed on to other people.

These include pneumonia and infections of the lower respiratory tract, which account for 23% of the total, urinary tract infections (17%) and surgical site infections (16%).

Prof Leng, who is deputy chief executive and director of health and social care at NICE, said: "It is unacceptable that infection rates are still so high within the NHS.

"Infections are a costly and avoidable burden. They hinder a patient's recovery, can make underlying conditions worse, and reduce quality of life."

The NICE standards say people should be prescribed antibiotics in accordance with guidelines and healthcare workers should follow procedures - including hand-washing - to cut the risk of infection when devices such as catheters are inserted.

Prof Leng added: "Although there have been major improvements within the NHS in infection control, particularly in relation to Clostridium difficile and MRSA bloodstream infections in the last few years, healthcare-associated infections are still a very real threat to patients, their families and carers and staff.

"This quality standard gives primary, community and secondary care services the most up-to-date advice on the best ways to minimise the risks of infections."

Tom Sandford, director of the Royal College of Nursing in England, said: "Infection prevention and control are key to patient safety and need to be prioritised by every health service organisation.

"It is vital that all health care workers are actively involved in upholding infection control and hygiene standards and nursing staff have

been at the forefront of many successful efforts to reduce infections and promote patient safety.

"Infection prevention and control are serious issues that require clear leadership.

"All health employers should provide leadership at a local level and support their staff in adhering to NICE's quality standard, from making sure they receive relevant training to allowing them the time to follow the correct procedures."

[Your comments \(157\)](#)

Comments

This entry is now closed for comments

[Editors' Picks](#) [All Comments \(157\)](#)

130. Ant

7 HOURS AGO

+1

Hospitals have hand wash dispensers for staff, patients and visitors but I observed only 10-20% of people using them.

When I asked why more was not done to control this, I was told that you cannot force people to use the dispensers . – Why not?

125. A Realist

7 HOURS AGO

-5

I'm certain that the "Ward" principle is a major contributor to infection being passed between patients. I suggest that wards be converted to private rooms with individual, en suite toilets.

I've never met a patient who enjoys being on a ward - but I've met loads who enjoy the peaceful enjoyment of a side room when they can get one.

The control of infections would be worth the refurb.

95. Student Nurse

8 HOURS AGO

+12

As a 3rd year nursing student, I can guarantee you that we have extensive hand washing training. I remember having to watch a video of someone washing their hands and having two full training days learning and practicing the correct technique. We even washed our hands with a substance that shows up on a UV light if not correctly washed off. ICP is of paramount during our training and career.

82. Hondonius

8 HOURS AGO

+6

Try not to blame the Nurses and doctors ..They are constantly getting Infection control lecturesTry educating visitors when they visit or come to outpatients in hand hygiene ..Oh and when I'm at it ..Try reinstating the washing of uniforms inhouse at Hospitals rather than the nurses having to take them home and do them themselves.(no joke)Nurses & Docs Moral at an all time low YOU bet it is

76. Hungrugbyplayer

8 HOURS AGO

+6

There seems to be a huge difference in cleaning practices throughout the country. My recent weeks stay in hospital (Glenfield, Leicester) certainly highlighted the brilliant cleaning regime in place. I was in a ward with a high bed turnover, and each time a patient was discharged it was like a major incident cleaning down not only the bed area, but every square inch of the bed itself. Well done

[Sign in](#) or [Register](#) to comment and rate comments

All posts are [reactively-moderated](#) and must obey the [house rules](#).

[More Health stories](#)



[Sensors to prevent pain for amputees](#)

[\[/news/health-26891863\]](#)

Researchers have developed a new type of pressure sensor - dubbed a "second skin" - which they say could prevent dangerous sores.

[Glaxo 'paid Polish doctors bribes'](#)

[\[/news/business-26970873\]](#)

['Millions wasted' on flu drug](#)

[\[/news/health-26954482\]](#)



BBC © 2014 [The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites. Read more.](#)