

Perspectives of Healthcare Workers on Healthcare-Associated Infections and Infection Control in a Tertiary Care Hospital in Abha, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract : Research Objectives and Goal: The main aim of the current study was to explore the perspectives of healthcare workers on Healthcare-associated infections (HAI) and infection control measures in a tertiary care Hospital in Abha, Saudi Arabia. As per our knowledge, this is perhaps the first qualitative study on HAI to be done in Saudi Arabia. The goal of the study was to understand the perspectives of the healthcare workers on the current protocol and guidelines for HAI and infections control measures in the hospital, the effectiveness of the current protocol for HAI and infection control measures and ways of reducing the incidence of HAI and improve infection control measures. Methods used: A qualitative research design was used to collect the data from 25 healthcare workers consisting of doctors and nurses, recruited by Snowball strategy via semi-structured interviews which were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim immediately. An interview guide consisting of open-ended questions about the existing HAI and infection control practices in the healthcare facility, the awareness of the healthcare workers about HAI and the need for safe infection control measures were used to collect the data. The transcribed data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method. Results: Using thematic analysis four themes were identified. 1. Knowledge of HAI and infection control 2. Infection control measures in practice 3. The gap in infection control measures and HAI 4. Required Implementations. The first theme covered the participants' knowledge on HAI, its definition, the types of HAI and the infection control measures. Most of the participants were aware of HAI and had some idea of the definition of HAI, its significance and the dangers posed by HAI, but few residents had no idea of the types of HAI. The second theme was focussed on the infection control measures in practice. Most of the participants were aware of the importance of infection control measures like hand hygiene, catheter care, and waste disposal. The nurses were responsible for most of the disinfection and sterilization measures and practiced it effectively. However, some doctors and residents had no inkling about these measures. The third theme emphasized that although most of the participants were aware of HAI and infection control measures and were in practice. There were some lacunae regarding their knowledge of the different types of HAI, Personal Protective Equipment practices, communication among the healthcare personnel and the hospital administrations and the means of waste disposal. The fourth and the final theme identified that most of the participants felt the need for implementations of changes regarding existing protocols, workshops/seminars, methods of waste disposal and sterilization and disinfection practices. Conclusion: The current qualitative study concluded that there is a need for better educational programs and hands-on training for all the healthcare personnel including the paramedical staff as well. The residents should have adequate knowledge of infection control practices to guide the nurses and should share the responsibility with the nurses in the practice of effective infection control measures

Keywords : healthcare-associated infections, infection control measures, perspectives, qualitative

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