

INTERNATIONAL PEDIATRICS, INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND
HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE
&
8th International Conference on
BACTERIOLOGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES
November 22-24, 2018 Cape Town, South Africa

A study of infection control practices in laundry of a multispecialty tertiary care hospital

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Infection control practices in the laundry services is an inevitable prerequisite for TQM, HAI prevention, healthcare worker safety, quality cure, cost-effectiveness and marketing triumph in a hospital. Clean healthcare laundry plays a vital role in affecting the psychological perception and satisfaction of healthcare staff, patient and public. Laundry in healthcare include bed sheets, gowns, doctors clothing, blankets, towels, patient apparel, etc. and this linen contamination can be a source of HAIs and pose a risk of disease transmission to the users. Therefore, incorporation of infection control measures are of utmost importance to minimize the contribution of contaminated laundry to the incidence of HAIs. Henceforth, present study was conducted with the objectives to evaluate infection control measures being practiced in laundry in one of the multispecialty tertiary care hospital of North India to provide the clean linen and minimize the infections to patients as well as to healthcare staff. In pre-wash phase, all linen collected in the different hospital areas is assumed to be contaminated; hence, standard precautions are taken to handle the linen and to minimize the microbial contamination to environment during collection and transportation. There are designated spaces in the wards to keep the soiled linen. In washing phase, there is separate entry for receiving and separate trolleys for carrying linen in the laundry. Established set patterns and pre-fixed time cycle for each step is followed in each wash process i.e. pre-wash, wash, rinse and final rinsing. Also, standards are fixed for water level/usage for each cycle, temperature (for wash cycle, rinse cycle, dryer time and ironing time), bleach usage and chemical usage for each step in the wash process. Ironing machine/bench press machines used for ironing the linen is maintained so as to adequately iron, dry and fold the linen. In post wash, while packaging and storing the linen in laundry, loading on the trucks, shifting in the linen bank and at user end, adequate care is done to prevent soiling or contamination. To conclude, infection control practices in laundry services are one of the essential requirements to minimize the hospital acquired infections and provide the better care and safety to patients as well as to healthcare providers.

Biography

Ashok Kumar did his MBBS from LLRM Medical College, Meerut and subsequently MD from the same college in 1992. He has served in AIIMS, New Delhi as a Senior Resident from 1993-1996 in the Centre for Community Medicine. Then he was appointed as a Chief Medical Officer of Farraka Barrage Project Hospital, Farraka, West Bengal under Ministry of Water Resource, Government of India in 1996. He has then joined Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education & Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, India as a Deputy Medical Superintendent and currently working as a Professor in Department of Hospital Administration and looking after administrative services of Advanced Cardiac Centre.

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