

'It's OK to Ask' Feasibility Study – Update 11 April 2008

On Tuesday this week we held our second workshop with the five trusts who have been participating in the three-month feasibility study to explore ways in which we can better involve patients in hand hygiene. This work precedes a more detailed pilot that will begin later this month. At the workshop, we reported back on the headline results of the four surveys that have been undertaken in the last two months:

- A public opinion survey
- A survey of inpatient within the five participating trusts
- A survey of clinical staff from the five participating trusts
- An online survey of clean**your**hands campaign co-ordinators across all acute trusts in England

While the detail of each survey won't be finalised for another two weeks, there is some interesting information to share with you. The first set of results applies to both the public and inpatient survey.

- Generally, people were receptive to the idea of being given a bottle of alcohol handrub on admission to hospital
- They would prefer the handrub is given to them by a healthcare worker rather than an administrator or someone else
- They would prefer to receive some written information about the handrub and its purpose
- Having been given the handrub, people said they would then be more likely to ask healthcare workers whether they have cleaned their hands. They would be less likely to ask if they didn't have the handrub as a prompt
- Without knowing, people generally believed if they were given the handrub it would be for their personal use or for the use of visitors
- They generally believed that healthcare workers should use the handrub without the patient having to ask them.

The staff surveyed at the five participating trusts held mixed views about the success of giving patients a bottle of handrub as a prompt for healthcare workers. The majority of respondents said hand hygiene would be improved if patients were provided with a bottle of handrub as a prompt however about a quarter said it would create tensions.

Significantly, the results suggest not all healthcare workers are using the handrub or cleaning their hands at the point of care as specified by the World Health Organisation's 'five moments.'

The online survey of campaign co-ordinators (who are predominately infection control nurses) showed that virtually all trusts are already involving patients in hand hygiene improvement. Most are utilising the leaflet for patients provided by as part of the campaign materials and many are providing their own information on importance of hand hygiene either directly, as part of pre-admission packs or via PALS.

It also demonstrated the concern amongst patients and the public about infection as the majority of queries received by infection control teams were about infection rates for the trust or a specific ward.

The NPSA is very grateful to the five participating trusts for their valuable time and contribution to this feasibility study. It has been extremely helpful to have an expert group with whom we have been able to share ideas and gauge opinions.

Next Tuesday, there is a meeting of the Patient Empowerment Steering Committee chaired by Professor Didier Pittet. The results of the surveys will be provided to the committee and the agenda will include a detailed discussion of how the pilot programme should proceed.

For more information about the surveys and their results, please contact the clean**your**hands team at the NPSA.