

THE ROLE OF NURSING IN PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF HOSPITAL ACQUIRED INFECTIONS (HAI)

Ali A Mohammadi

Global Health and Security Consultants, Switzerland

Hospital acquired infections (HAIs), or commonly known as nosocomial infections, are infection acquired from the hospital by patients who are admitted for other reasons. In order for an infection to be considered as nosocomial, it should have been occurring for more than 48 hours after the patient's admission. These infections are caused by any microorganisms (bacteria, viruses or parasites) that originate from the hospital environment, contaminated equipment, staff, or other patients. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that the most common types of HAI are: urinary tract infections, respiratory infections, surgical wound infections (2002). Among all the multidisciplinary health care providers, nurses are the ones who constantly provide bedside care to the patients and are in close contact with them. This may also mean there is a higher likelihood for HAIs to be transmitted to patients through them. On the other hand, nurses have the unique opportunity to reduce the potential for HAIs in their health care facility. Meaning that, by utilizing the skills and knowledge acquired through nursing practice, they can facilitate patient recovery while minimizing complications related to infections. Nurses have many tools available to create a safe environment for patients that among others, there are five main areas of nursing practice where they can help and monitor control and prevention of HAIs which are as follows: promotion of hand hygiene, make best use of aseptic techniques, universal precautionary practices, patient's education and cleaning and disinfection practices. That will later be discussed in more details. Therefore, nursing play important role in preventing hospital-acquired infections, not only by ensuring that all aspects of their nursing practice are properly conducted, but also through nursing research, patient education and implementation of infection control practices.

mohammadi@global-consultant.org