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Agenda Item N°4.1

PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A HAND HYGIENE PROGRAMME IN VANUATU

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Port Vila Central Hospital (VCH), Vanuatu, has implemented a comprehensive program to improve Hand Hygiene (HH) practices. The hand hygiene training was funded by the Pacific Community and delivered by Hand Hygiene Australia (HHA). The training program included training IPC focal points on the Gold Standard HH Auditors training, who were then able to train other staff as General Auditors.

Substantial progress has been made with HH compliance rates increasing from a baseline compliance of 23% in June/July 2022 to 50% in November 2022. This improvement is the result of the implementation education and other multimodal activities. The data obtained from the audits of HH practice, and lessons from the implementation of the action plan will inform future activities for ongoing improvements to HH and IPC practices.

1. BACKGROUND

Through support from the Pacific Community (SPC), VCH Hospital IPC focal points were provided HH audit training which was co-facilitated by the Doherty Institute and Hand Hygiene Australia (HHA) Manager and Program Coordinator Kate Ryan

The hand hygiene training is aligned to the WHO '5 Moments for Hand Hygiene' to reduce Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI's) through the implementation of the multimodal hand hygiene improvement strategy.

Vanuatu volunteered to be the pilot country for the training and five (5) participants from the IPC team at VCH and the Vanuatu UNICEF WASH program made up the first cohort of health care workers from the PICTs to be trained as Gold Standard HH auditors.

Three wards at VCH (Surgical, Medical and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)) were used as the pilot sites for the baseline audits that were carried out in the months of June/July 2022, and the follow-up audit that was carried out in November 2022.

2. PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- Following 8 hours online training, a baseline hand hygiene audit was carried out in the VCH surgical, medical and NICU wards that indicated a **23% compliance rate**.
- The HH baseline data was shared with staff for information and feedback/comments. Follow-up was conducted for suggestions/ideas on ways to improve HH compliance rate.
- A multi-modal action plan (including budget) was developed to improve the HH compliance rate at VCH. This included the implementation of:
 - Improvements to infrastructure (including fixing of hand sinks and sufficient space for storing ward equipment and items/supplies) and consumable supplies (including Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR) and hand soaps).
 - Posters of HH steps to enable proper handwashing or hand rub were pinned up above HH sinks or next to ABHR bottles. The 3 wards were donated with 3 new IPC notice boards.

- Development of a HH training/education plan. Nurses from the three wards were trained on the '5 Moments of HH' and why HH is so important. Further awareness of HH was conducted in the hospital.
- Following implementation of the multi-modal action plan, a second audit of the same wards was carried out in November 2022, that demonstrated an increased rate of compliance from 23% to 50%.

3. CHALLENGES

- Lack of funds makes it difficult to install appropriate hand hygiene stations.
- Inadequate HH supplies.

4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Hand hygiene practices prevent infections, generate economic savings and are therefore a minimum requirement for IPC in all health care facilities [1].

- Investment in HH to improve compliance in acute care settings.
- Review procurement and stock systems /processes to ensure efficient management and supply of hand hygiene supplies.
- IPC capacity building and creation of IPC expertise through IPC training and continuous education.
- Establish hand hygiene compliance as a national key indicator.

References

[1] WHO, "Global report on infection," World Health Organization, Geneva, 2022.
