Just Culture (JC) – Does Accountability Change Health Maintenance of a near perfect Hand Hygiene (HH) and Isolation (Iso) Compliance (C) despite high Isolation Density Hand Hygiene Care Professionals (HCP) Hand Hygiene Compliance (HHC)?

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**Background**

- HH is considered the most important way to prevent infections.
- Improved HH has been a goal for more than a decade.
- Despite efforts, HHC plateaued at ~70%.
- In 2012 a new campaign included:
  - Switch from Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to World Health Organization’s (WHO) 5 Moments of Care Guidelines.
  - Use of promotional materials/education to increase awareness of the HH importance.
- Adopted “Just Culture” (JC)
  - A culture that recognizes that competent professionals make mistakes and acknowledges that even competent professionals will develop unhealthy norms (shortcuts, “routine rule violations”), but has zero tolerance for reckless behavior.
- After 2 months, HH improved to 99%.

- JC is a system design to affect behavior.
- HCP are held accountable through disciplinary action for conscious disregard for safety but not for system failures.
- The immediate response to the campaign led to near perfect HHC.

**Setting**

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Presbyterian is a 766-bed tertiary care facility affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences.

**Objective**

To determine if near perfect HHC would be sustained using JC.

**Methods**

- UPMC – P ~800 standardized HH observations (Os) were collected monthly across 35 units which included 8 ICUs.
- HH Os were done by 4 trained covert (Co) monitors (M).
- Staff nominated “Birthday” reminder word was reinforced.
- The acknowledgment of HH importance can become incorporated into the way work is done and system change can be achieved and sustained when JC system design is utilized.
- HH C increased from a mean of 62.7% in P1 to 96.9% in P2 and has been sustained at ≥ 97% for 27 months.
  - OR =0.05 (C1,0.05-0.06, p<10⁻¹⁰)
  - 117 HCP have been through the JC eval/progressive disciplinary process.
    - 112 verbal warnings
    - 1 written warning
    - 2 terminated
    - 2 cases dismissed.

**INTERVENTIONS**

- System Change to reliably support HH Practices
  - Leadership
  - Case Reviews

- Progressive Discipline
  - JC eval for NonC only triggered by CoM
  - All staff to include Medical Staff
    - Verbal warning
    - Written warning
    - Final written warning
    - Termination
  - A parallel process was designed for medical staff that included warnings and fines to $500.

- Education/Communication
  - Annual education of over 2,000 employees
  - Online promotional material
  - Electronic communication
  - Screen savers
  - NonC Os by anyone other than CoM including Senior level administration were teaching moments (TMs).

- Environment
  - Ongoing inspection of availability of alcohol hand sanitizer and CHG soap

**Results**

**BIRTHDAY!**

Here’s to fewer infections and more birthdays: Sing “Happy Birthday” while performing HH to ensure proper timing.

**Conclusions**

- Incorporating a JC of patient safety with accountability and potential disciplinary action can drive HHC to near 100% and sustain near perfect HHC.
- Initiatives without accountability may increase HHC but gains are not sustainable.
- The acknowledgment of HH importance can become incorporated into the way work is done and system change can be achieved and sustained when JC system design is utilized.