

HAND HYGIENE IN HEALTH CARE: KEY DATA



Hand Hygiene Data Points

Use data to convince your audience of the importance of hand hygiene. This sheet lists some of the key data you can include in your hand hygiene advocacy work.

Healthcare-associated infections

- Globally, healthcare-associated infections affect more than 1 million people at any given time.¹
- Healthcare-associated infections affect 15% of patients in developing countries, and about 7% of patients in developed countries.^{2,3}
- Every year, antimicrobial resistance leads to around 700,000 deaths.⁴
- Sepsis accounts for approximately 6 million deaths every year.⁵
- Globally, sepsis is the third most common cause of maternal mortality, and up to 56% of neonatal deaths among babies born in hospitals are due to infection in developing countries.^{6,7}
- Infections, including sepsis, led to nearly 400,000 newborn deaths in 2016 alone, accounting for 15% of newborn mortality.⁸

Potential of improved hand hygiene

- Infection prevention and control measures, such as appropriate hand hygiene practices, can reduce health care-associated infections by more than 50%.⁹
- HCAs can increase length of stay in hospitals by 5 to nearly 30 days for patients who develop infections during hospital stays.¹⁰
- These changes would save some countries over \$28 billion annually.⁹

Hand hygiene practice

- Hand hygiene is a highly effective way to prevent infection, but it is estimated that only 40% of health workers practice correct hand hygiene.⁷
- In some facilities up to 90% of staff do not adhere to best practices, even when supplies are available.⁷

Water, sanitation, and hygiene in health facilities

- A study of healthcare facilities in 54 countries found that 35% failed to offer soap and water for handwashing.¹¹
- A 2018 study found that 66% of health facilities in low- and middle-income countries lack soap and piped water for handwashing.¹²
- Only 2% of health facilities provided sufficient water, sanitation, hygiene, and waste management services.¹²

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- ¹ WHO. (2018). Evidence for hand hygiene guidelines. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/gpsc/tools/faqs/evidence_hand_hygiene/en/
- ² Allegranzi B, et al. (2011). Burden of endemic health-care-associated infection in developing countries: systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet*, 377(9761).
- ³ WHO. (2018). The burden of health care-associated infection worldwide. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/gpsc/country_work/summary_20100430_en.pdf
- ⁴ Tackling drug-resistant infections globally: Final report and recommendations. (2016). *Review on Antimicrobial Resistance*. Retrieved from https://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/160525_Final%20paper_with%20cover.pdf
- ⁵ Fleischmann C, Scherag A, Adhikari NK, et al. (2017). Assessment of Global Incidence and Mortality of Hospital-treated Sepsis. *Current Estimates and Limitations*. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med*, 193(3), 259-72.
- ⁶ World Health Organization (2017). Statement on Maternal Sepsis.
- ⁷ World Health Organization. (2016). Health care without avoidable infections: The critical role of infection prevention and control. Retrieved from <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/246235/WHO-HIS-SDS-2016.10-eng.pdf?sequence=1>
- ⁸ UNICEF (2018). Every Child Alive: The urgent need to end newborn deaths
- ⁹ WHO. (2018). 10 facts on patient safety. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/patient_safety/en/
- ¹⁰ WHO. (2011). Report on the Burden of Endemic Health Care-Associated Infection Worldwide: Clean care is safe care. Retrieved from http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/80135/1/9789241501507_eng.pdf
- ¹¹ WHO/UNICEF. (2015). Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Health Care Facilities: Status in low- and middle-income countries and way forward. Retrieved from http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/154588/1/9789241508476_eng.pdf
- ¹² Cronk, R. & Bartram, J. (2018). Environmental conditions in health care facilities in low- and middle-income countries: Coverage and inequalities. *International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health*, 221(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijheh.2018.01.004>