

## Education and Hand Hygiene (2/07)

Wisniewski MF, Kim S, Trick WE, Welbel SF, Weinstein RA, Chicago Antimicrobial Resistance Project. Effect of education on hand hygiene beliefs and practices: a 5-year program. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol* 2007;28:88–91.

This study evaluated infection control and hand hygiene understanding at three public hospitals. The authors surveyed 4,345 health-care workers (HCWs) three times over five years. The preference for the use of alcohol hand rub for hand hygiene increased dramatically; in nurses, it increased from 14% to 34%; in physicians, 4.3% to 51%; and in allied HCWs, 12% to 44%. The authors attribute the changes to having made the alcohol-based hand rub more accessible, to the use of interactive educational methods, and to repetition of the basic message—that hand hygiene is essential for infection control—in multiple teaching venues during the five years. **Study year, infection control interactive education-session attendance, infection control knowledge, and being a physician or allied HCW independently predicted a preference for alcohol hand rub.**



**DECS Comment: The study reinforces that education is a cornerstone for improvement with hand-hygiene practices. Educational programs should address the impact of improved hand hygiene on disease transmission rates; awareness of hand-hygiene guidelines; knowledge about the low adherence rate to hand hygiene; and information about the use of hand-hygiene and skin-care protection products. Making a change, such as introducing alcohol-based hand rubs, without providing ongoing education and motivation may only result in a transient improvement in hand hygiene. Ongoing educational and motivational activities may be needed for long-lasting improvement in hand-hygiene practices.**

### Reference

CDC. Guideline for hand hygiene in health-care settings: recommendations of the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee and the HICPAC/SHEA/APIC/IDSA Hand Hygiene Task Force. *MMWR* 2002;51(No. RR-16).