



Symposium 18.2

Changing behaviour to control infection

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Microbiology and Epidemiology have made significant contributions to the field of Infection Control. Most nosocomial infections, which can be prevented, are related to inappropriate patient care practices. Therefore to prevent nosocomial infections, we must change patient care practices, which is really managing the human factor. It is known that the implementation of new infection control policies can be extremely difficult because of poor staff compliance. To achieve staff compliance, infection control should learn from the Behavioural Sciences and Quality Management. There are three related fields in the Behavioural Sciences that are shown to be helpful in this respect: "Social Psychology, Consumer Behaviour and Organizational Behaviour". A review of research conducted on the applications of these sciences in Infection Control will be presented. Studies on the application from Quality Management techniques in Infection Control will also be reviewed and reported. Although these studies have contributed to more effective infection control practices, failure persists in certain areas like the implementation of good hand hygiene practices. To further understand the dynamics of infection control, a quantitative ethnographic study by a trained social researcher was conducted for two years in Queen Mary Hospital. This has resulted in a better understanding of our previous failures in enhancing hand hygiene. Based on the findings a strategy for enhancing hand hygiene practices was developed and will be reported.