

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAND HYGIENE IN THE ERA OF ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP

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EDITORIAL

In the current healthcare landscape, the increasing prevalence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has brought into sharp focus the need for more stringent antimicrobial stewardship plans. These agendas aim to improve the use of antibiotics and few other antimicrobial agents to preserve their effectiveness. However, one essential yet often overlooked component of infection control - hand hygiene - plays a pivotal role in the success of these stewardship initiatives.¹

Hand hygiene, the process of cleaning hands using either soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers, has long been recognized as one of the most effective methods for preventing the spread of infections in healthcare settings. This practice is not just a foundational element of infection control, but also a critical strategy in reducing the transmission of multi-drug-resistant organisms (MDROs) that contribute to the growing AMR crisis.² Enhancing hand hygiene compliance is not just about preventing infections—it is also a critical strategy for antimicrobial stewardship, as it helps reduce the need for antibiotic interventions in the first place. In the era of antimicrobial stewardship, the role of hand hygiene becomes even more significant. The improper use or overuse of antibiotics, combined with lapses in infection control practices like hand hygiene, can accelerate the emergence of resistant strains of bacteria.³ This gap in practice underscores the necessity for constant education, training, and monitoring to ensure that hand hygiene is consistently practiced as part of daily routines.

The importance of hand hygiene cannot be overstated in the fight against antimicrobial resistance. By improving hand hygiene practices, we can reduce the spread of infectious diseases, limit the use of unnecessary antibiotics, and slow the emergence of antimicrobial resistance.

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