

How to ensure linen change on a daily basis to reduce the infection chance?

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Sir,

Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI) are common now a days among hospitalized patients. If it's not controlled, it can lead to further outbreaks in hospitals. We should care about patients surrounding materials like linen change on regular basis. It looks very simple but can be major contributor in the view of HAI⁽¹⁾. We frequently observe that patients' linens are stained with blood and body fluids which can transmit various infections to the patient and their surrounding people. Nursing staff may not be able to give attention to linen change requests because they are busy with other important patient care work. The nursing staff informs class-4 attendant staff about linen change, but the nursing staff cannot be sure whether the linen has been changed or not.

We would like to bring to the fore some challenges faced in resource-limited settings regarding linen change. Changing linen after a day or between patients has to be carried out religiously and according to hospital policy⁽²⁾. Failing in this practice may increase the chances of infections in patients, which can result in difficult-to-treat infections, and in the end, or may be fatal⁽³⁾. There are many challenges that may impede this procedure. Adequate linen, presence of a dedicated laundry, and well-motivated and educated ward staff are absolutely necessary for compliance. Changing linen may not be a top priority in a setting if not properly trained due to heavy workload or poor compliance. So, to be accountable, many setups have come out with color-coded bed sheets for each day⁽⁴⁾. It serves the purpose of changing the linen every day, and even a lay person can notice it. Changing linen is not enough; the person will have to be adequately trained in this aspect⁽⁵⁾. One problem with color-coded linen may be that the soiled portion may not be visible to the naked eye on dark-colored linen; which can be solved by choosing light colors linen.

Many private and public hospitals have started implementing this practice. This color-coding practice can be implemented for other things than linen material. We know, this practice is expensive. Hospitals have to purchase and use multiple linens and other materials, which will reflect in patients' hospital bills, but nothing is more valuable than human lives. Also, if a patient is safe from linen-type HAI, he/she can be discharged early, and the bill will be reduced automatically.

In a nutshell, we conclude that every health care provider should care about the regular cleaning and disinfecting process of the patient surrounding materials particularly which need to be changed on a regular basis to prevent HAI, especially in critically ill patients' areas.

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