

## 097: PRO-HYG PROJECT: IMPROVING INFECTION CONTROL IN AUSTRIAN HOSPITALS

### Authors:

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### Objective:

In spring 2001, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Social Security and Generations initiated the project "Organization and strategies for hospital hygiene" ("Pro-Hyg"-project) aiming to improve the quality of hospital hygiene in Austria.

### Methods:

Evidence based guidelines and defined minimal standards for organization of hospital hygiene are essential tools to cope with this task. Such tools are to be established by cooperation of 28 experts from various fields working within the framework of this project. The peer group employed the methodology of the "Plan-Do-Check-Act" cycle (PDCA cycle) for quality improvement.

### Results:

1. Plan: A decrease in the incidence of hospital acquired infections would be the long term goal of this project. Aims of the Pro-Hyg project were defined as follows: a) to increase the awareness of physicians and nurses of the importance of infection control, b) to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the "hygiene teams", c) to contribute to the reduction of nosocomial infection rates in Austrian hospitals, d) to improve the satisfaction of the "hygiene teams" with their working conditions.
2. Do: A postal survey was performed amongst all Austrian hospitals to establish the present state of hospital hygiene and to define the felt need of the "hygiene teams". Based on the initial intent of the legislation and on the results of the survey, the peer group worked out recommendations for the objectives of the "hygiene teams", their position and role within the hospital organization, the resources needed to reach their goals, and the curriculum for qualification. Standardization within the peer group is achieved in a consensual manner. These recommendations are published as a national guideline. The national guidelines are being sent to all hospital managers, medical directors, "hygiene teams" and public health officers.
3. Check: An evaluation of the effect of the guidelines is planned after three years. Success of the project will be assessed by comparing the results of the two postal surveys.
4. Act: The peer group will meet after this evaluation to decide on actions needed to further achieve the aim of the project.

### Conclusions:

During the last ten years, nosocomial infections have been increasingly the subject of official public health policy. Austrian legislation requires hospitals to install "hygiene teams" in order to prevent and combat nosocomial infections. Absence of detailed instructions about tasks, duties and organizational details of such "hygiene teams" led to major differences in the way of implementation. In view of the EU Decision 21/19/98/EC, and given the lack of consensus on the actual parameters (staff, duties, aims) of "hygiene teams", the Federal Ministry for Social Security and Generations initiated the project "Organization and strategies for hospital hygiene" ("Pro-Hyg"-project). By convening national experts and employing the methodology of the "Plan-Do-Check-Act" cycle (PDCA cycle) the project succeeded in generating baseline recommendations about nosocomial infection surveillance, hygiene-guidelines, curriculum development and other related matters.