WHO Infection Prevention and Control
Global Newsletter

28 January 2022

News from WHO headquarters

IPC on agenda at WHO’s 150th Executive Board (EB) meeting, Geneva, 24–29 January 2022

For the 150th WHO EB meeting, the Director-General submitted a report to Member States on the spread of infection and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in health care facilities and resulting impact. The report presents the global situation of infection prevention and control (IPC) programmes at the national and facility levels, including gaps and challenges, as well as providing an overview of WHO’s recent activities on IPC. It also proposes priorities and actions aimed at improving associated programmes. The Board was invited to provide further guidance.

Interventions were made by over 20 Member States covering all six WHO regions, and included ones on behalf of the African, Eastern Mediterranean and European regions. There were also comments from seven non-state actors. Member States consistently highlighted the importance of IPC in addressing widespread concern about the silent burden of AMR and health care-associated infections (HAI) and recognized that IPC is a cross-cutting area at the heart of many health priorities and sustainable development goals and targets. Other important points made during the interventions were the need for substantial investment in WASH programmes to enable effective IPC to be implemented; a recognition that IPC lies at the core of infectious hazard health emergency preparedness and response; the concern that health worker and patient safety is seriously compromised without effective IPC; and finally that IPC is critical to the provision of high-quality and safe health care for all through health systems strengthening and a primary health care approach.

Member States fully recognize the gaps in IPC programmes, which have been highlighted by the pandemic, and the need, and this unique opportunity, to respond now by strengthening IPC programmes at all levels, to save lives, save money and to restore communities’ trust in health care at all levels. Several Member States requested the development of a Global IPC strategy which will be developed in close consultation with Member States. Further information relating to WHO EB150 can be found here.
New main poster World Hand Hygiene Day (WHHD) – 5 May 2022
This year's slogan is **Unite for safety – clean your hands.** Do please use this powerful campaign image featured in the [main 2022 campaign poster](#), which is available in all 6 UN languages, and start promoting WHHD 2022.

To prioritize clean hands in health facilities, at the right times and with the right products, people at all levels need to be convincing in their belief that hand hygiene and infection prevention are vitally important. In this way, they can then act as key advocates to encourage the appropriate behaviours and attitudes towards hand hygiene. In other words, **health workers at all levels and people accessing health care facilities need to unite on clean hands.**

Last December, we announced that the theme for this year’s World Hand Hygiene Day, on 5 May 2022, would focus on recognizing that we can add to a facility's climate or culture of safety and quality through **cleaning our hands**, but also that a strong quality and safety culture is what best supports clean hands.

Now we ask you to unite with others to achieve quality and safety through talking and working together on hand hygiene improvement. Below we announce the calls to action to our target audiences at all levels of health care. Please use the approach of thanking people as a positive way of engaging them to do this. These messages work in all languages.

- **Health workers** - thank you for leading by example and encouraging others to clean their hands
- **IPC practitioners** - thank you for engaging health workers to be part of new hand hygiene initiatives
- **Quality and safety leads** - thank you for working with infection prevention colleagues to support hand hygiene improvement
- **Facility managers** - thank you for promoting a quality and safety culture to ensure clean hands
• **Policy-makers** - thank you for prioritizing resources, training and programmes on hand hygiene  
• **People who use health care** - thank you for getting involved in local hand hygiene campaigns and activities.

Remember that you can also use the [campaign toolkit](#) for ideas on how to organize your health facility for 5 May. And please spread the word to your colleagues to [sign up](#) to the campaign if they have not already done so.

**Antimicrobial resistance**
WHO welcomes an important new study by the Institute for Health metrics and Evaluation (IHME) on the **Global burden of AMR**, published in The Lancet. New evidence now shows that in 2019 an estimated 1.27 million deaths were directly attributable to AMR and 4.95 million deaths were associated with AMR, underlining the urgent need to scale up action to address AMR. Lack of robust global data and evidence of the impact of drug resistance has been a critical knowledge gap and has hampered efforts to advocate for policies and practices to control AMR. This new study clearly demonstrates the existential threat that AMR poses to global health and modern medicine. WHO supports these efforts to determine the full extent of the burden of disease from AMR and calls for a significant strengthening of microbiology laboratory networks worldwide, together with innovative AMR surveys to fill data gaps going forward. WHO is leading global efforts in a multi-sectoral One Health response - maximizing the public health impact in every country, forging a common vision and purpose, driving R&D for better prevention and care, and monitoring the burden and response.

There will be a [virtual launch event](#) for the findings of this study on **Friday 4 February, 18.00-19.30 CET**.

**Confirmed speakers include:**

- Professor Chris Murray, Director of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation  
- Dame Sally Davies, UK Special Envoy on AMR  
- Dr Hanan Balkhy, Assistant Director-General for Antimicrobial Resistance, World Health Organization  
- Dr Richard Horton, Editor-in-Chief of The Lancet

You can [register here](#) to join the session live.

The first-ever joint European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)-WHO European Region report on Antimicrobial resistance surveillance in Europe 2022 (2020 data) was launched recently. It is a major accomplishment for which WHO headquarters thanks our colleagues at the ECDC, the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), the European Society for Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID), the AMR team at the WHO Regional Office for Europe, as well as the network focal points for all the countries which contributed data to this report.
You can find the report on both the [WHO Regional Office for Europe website](https://www.euro.who.int/en) and the [ECDC website](https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/).

**Water and sanitation for health (WASH) – Upcoming launch of a new WHO publication: Global analysis of health care waste in the context of COVID-19**

On 1 February, WHO will launch a new publication which quantifies the additional health care waste generated because of COVID-19. It also describes current health care waste management systems and their deficiencies, as well as summarizing emerging best practices and solutions to reduce the impact of waste on human and environmental health. A webinar will be held at 13:00 CET on 1 February to present the findings from the report, highlight implications for countries and partners and share examples of innovative and environmentally sustainable solutions. WHO will be joined by speakers from the Global Fund, Health Care Without Harm, IFC, R4H and UNDP.

Register for the webinar [here](https://www.euro.who.int/en) and view the event in other time zones [here](https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/). Download a flyer to share with your networks [here](https://www.euro.who.int/en).
IPC in WHO Health Emergencies (WHE)
The WHO Health Emergencies IPC team now has a dedicated webpage where you can find IPC information for Emergency readiness and response.

The WHO COVID-19 IPC team is pleased to announce that the OPENWHO course entitled “Infection Prevention and Control in the context of COVID-19” has been updated and is now available in English on the OPENWHO IPC channel.

New technical guidance for COVID-19 has also been updated including a checklist for Infection prevention and control (IPC) in health care facilities in the event of a surge or resurgence in cases of COVID-19.

The WHO COVID-19 webpages for health workers and administrators is another great place to find the updated IPC technical guidance, training materials and infographics, such as this new infographic for health workers on how to improve their medical mask fit:
**News from our partners**

The International Federation of Infection Control (IFIC) and Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)

Please join IFIC and APIC as we collaborate to bring monthly informative webinars to global audiences. The first two this year will cover:

- **Risk communication and community engagement tools for infection prevention and control experts** with Christiana Salvi, Regional Advisor, Risk Communication and Community Engagement, Health Emergencies, WHO Regional Office for Europe, and will be held on 31 January at 15.00 CET.

- **Respiratory tract infections in the immunocompromised patient** with Ruth Carrico, Executive Director, Norton Infectious Diseases Institute at Norton Healthcare, Louisville, Kentucky, USA, to be held on 14 February at 16.00 CET.

Please go to the [IFIC website](#) where you can find more information and the link to register on their homepage. Also, if you click on the menu icon in the upper left corner, then Education, then Resources, you will reach the recordings to previous webinars.

For more information, please also contact Terrie Lee, Chair, IFIC Conference Committee, at [tleewv@msn.com](mailto:tleewv@msn.com).