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World

Clean Hands Leading to Safer Healthcare for Half the World's Population

<http://www.who.int/gpsc/en/>

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently announced that a total of 22 countries, representing 55% of the world's population, have signed on to the Global Patient Safety Challenge, a worldwide movement to address healthcare-associated infections, since it was launched by the WHO Alliance for Patient Safety in October 2005. Of the 22 participating countries, 10 are running hospital hand hygiene campaigns and have made an alcohol hand rub available at the point of care and 3 have set up national committees on infection control. Since the time of the WHO's announcement, 13 additional countries have committed to the initiative.

According to WHO estimates, at any given moment, some 1.4 million people worldwide suffer from infections acquired in hospitals. In developed countries, hospital-acquired infections affect 5% to 10% of patients. In some developing countries, as many as 25% of patients may be affected. Hand hygiene before care provision is one of the simplest and most powerful approaches to fighting healthcare-related infection. The WHO is encouraged by the growing commitment to clean, safer care around the world.

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