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Infection prevention control and patient safety culture within hospital isolation settings

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Background: Infections present a very real risk of harm and sometimes death within and outside the healthcare. In recent years, there have been high profile successes in infection prevention and control, such as the dramatic reductions in MRSA bloodstream infections (which is viewed as one proxy indicator of overall harm) and *Clostridium difficile* in the UK (Health Protection Agency, 2013; Public Health Wales, 2012). However, healthcare-associated infections (HCAI) continue to occur and continue to present a risk to users of healthcare. The present study describes the ways in which engagement of health workers with infection prevention control strategies and principles shape and inform organizational patient safety culture within isolation in surgical, medical and admission hospital settings; and vice-versa.

Research Methods: The study adopts a mixed-methods design incorporating quantitative data utilising the Manchester Patient Safety Framework (MaPSaF). MaPSaF assists us in seeing the levels of patient safety culture maturity in isolation settings at four district general hospitals, in one health board in Wales, UK. These data were supplemented by ethnographic case studies, involving qualitative semi-structured interviews and periods of observation on hospital wards, thus providing a more in-depth understanding of process, experience and outcomes, from the perspectives of health workers, isolated patients and their significant others.

Conclusion: All health workers should take ownership and responsibility for IPC. This study offers new understandings of the meaning of ownership for health workers; of the ways in which IPC is promoted, of how IPC teams operate as new challenges arise, how their effectiveness is assessed and of the positioning of IPC within the broader context of organisational patient safety culture, within hospital isolation settings.

Biography

Hunt is a sociologist with particular interest in ethnographic and participatory research methods. He previously worked on the Welsh Assembly Government's Sustainable Health Action Research Programme (SHARP), an action research initiative that focused on health inequalities and community health development. He has combined this with a keen interest in historical sociology and the impact of class and place upon social, cultural and economic life. Dr Hunt has experience of working with quantitative research methods and analysis.

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