

Hand hygiene



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

During my case assignment, the problem I will identify in the health care setting is an infection control issue that many hospitals or health care clinics are dealing with. Hand washing is said to be the first line to prevent the spread of infections. We teach our children, teachers and all of America that washing hands can decrease the chances of passing infections or viruses. We load our offices, pocketbooks, cars or any personal carry items with hand sanitizers because it is said to be just as effective as washing your hands.

During this class I hope to find out which is more effective hand washing or using hand sanitizer. In the earlier days during the 19th century, many patients were septic and dying from bacteria called *Streptococcus pyogenes* bacteria. This streak of dying patients was increasing with no one fully understanding why they were dying. Due to the increase number of deceased patients, many people feared going to hospitals with the thought they may never return. Hospital deaths increased at an alarming rate until it was discovered that the majority of infections were caused by the lack of hand washing by hospital staff.

Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis was an assistant on a maternity ward who realized that the mortality rate was increasing on the ward. He observed medical students leaving their classes and heading straight to the delivery rooms without using the proper hand washing techniques. This is when Dr. Semmelweis ordered all doctors and medical students to disinfect their hands with a chlorinated solution prior to performing any procedures or examining any patients. This is when the mortality rate began to decrease. After Dr.

Semmelweis discovery, hand washing techniques were made mandatory and set in to place for all health care settings. The purpose of disinfecting your hands is to prevent the spread of infections and virus. Our hands are the most popular body part we use to operate in our daily routine. We use our hands to greet each other and complete everyday task. With our hands being the important in our life we transport infections, bacteria or viruses just by shaking someone's hand or as simple as touching a door knob.

In the hospital setting hand washing is mandatory for all employees and should be enforced on our patients. Though it is mandatory to sanitize our hands, almost 60 percent of hospital personnel do not wash their hands while on duty. Infection control guidelines advise that we rinse our hands then perform a vigorous hand washing technique for 20 seconds, rinse again and then dry with paper towel using the towel to turn off the faucet. Many hospital personnel have neglected to execute this hand washing technique properly.

Instead there is a more frequent use of alcohol based gel used before and after patient care. Alcohol based gel kills 99.9% of the bacteria on hands 30 seconds after application. It is used as an alternative to soap and water for hand hygiene. Proper hand washing techniques is important to eliminate the possibility of transferring bacteria and micro-organisms. People who are more conscience of washing their hands are at a decreased risk for catching a cold or the flu.

In the health care setting, staff that is more conscience about their hand washing can prevent the spread of infection/bacteria from one patient to the

next. This can decrease the amount of patients with Nonsocomial infections. Nonsocomial infections are infections acquired within 48 hours of hospital admittance or 30 days after discharge. Overall, hand washing is important in order to decrease the chances of passing infections. If hospital personnel use proper hand washing techniques then there will be less of a chance of infections.