Infection Prevention Society response to the Keogh Review

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Notes on the Infection Prevention Society (IPS) can be found at the end of this statement

IPS Response to the Review and 14 Trust Reports:

The Infection Prevention Society (IPS) welcomes the review and its emphasis on maintaining the highest standards of infection prevention and control (IPC). In 2012 the Society worked with the Patients Association and Royal College of Nursing to recommend the need for a national discussion on the future of IPC, both its strategic structures and how best to guarantee sustainability and further improvements over time. This was informed by a survey of IPS members, specialists and leaders in the field.

The main Keogh Review highlights IPC as a concern in four of the 14 Trusts. Analysis of all 14 reports reveals IPC concerns mentioned in eight. Many of the concerns relate to lack of consistent application of IPC procedures/standards, lack of audit/monitoring, lack of local ownership, lack of awareness of the importance of infection prevention and lack of campaigning – IPS fully supports these points as they are all vital to the prevention of health care associated infection (HCAI).

Other key findings that IPS supports:

a. A need to triangulate staffing levels and HCAI risk;

b. Surgeons taking ownership of surgical site infections (SSI);

c. The urgent need to move towards realistic, accurate, reliable hand hygiene monitoring/compliance reporting with compliance monitored by validated tools;

d. The need to routinize hand hygiene, with an emphasis (that is not reinforced through any of the reports) on the point of care;

e. The need for hand hygiene products to be available in a reliable way, however, the emphasis (that is not reinforced through any of the reports) must be on point of care;

The individual Trust reviews include a number of IPC concerns that affect patient safety, that are highly subjective and not evidence based/informed. IPS does not support these findings and would suggest that they distract from the fundamentals of infection prevention, that our specialism aims to promote.

IPS considers the following findings unhelpful, ill informed and an unnecessary distraction:

a. Over emphasis on hand hygiene practice at ward entrances at the expense of highlighting point of patient care as the place where transmission is most likely;

b. Over-emphasis on Bare Below the Elbows approach without a concurrent emphasis on reliable compliance results at the point of patient care;

c. Over-emphasis on staff uniforms as a key vector of microbial transmission and in particular reference to nurse buckles as a source of cross infection;
d. The suggestion to enhance patient-visitor communication when visiting is restricted due to infection risk, through use of Skype and Face-time, with no qualification as to what infections would constitute such extreme and potentially psychologically harmful approaches.

IPS Recommends:

a. That any future rapid review team include a competent, informed infection prevention specialist to ensure that the review focuses on the correct infection prevention practices and that its recommendations are likely to have impact on the safety and experience of patients, visitors and staff.

b. A re-emphasis on evidence-based interventions that do make an immediate and important impact on patient outcome and experience particularly but not exclusively hand hygiene at the correct times; the management and removal of intravascular devices, and urinary catheters; and antimicrobial stewardship.

c. An explicit commitment to using multimodal approaches to the prevention of avoidable infections e.g. reliable products and resources placed at the relevant points in the healthcare environment, training and education, appropriate reminders in the workplace, valid and reliable monitoring and feedback and the right organizational culture. This will ensure that organisations recognise, understand and implement system improvement based on human factors and that support excellent IPC.

Conclusion:
We will continue to work with policy makers, regulators, patient organisations, fellow societies, NHS organisations and academia to provide the leadership and expert advice that will help to build the right culture, a safe environment and promote practices that ensure no person is harmed by a preventable infection.

About the Infection Prevention Society
The Infection Prevention Society (IPS) is a registered charity and one of the oldest membership organisations focused on infection prevention in the world. The IPS vision is that no person is harmed by a preventable infection. To make this vision a reality the mission of IPS is to inform, promote and sustain expert infection prevention policy and practice in the pursuit of patient/service user and staff safety across any setting where care is delivered. IPS does this by engaging and mobilising the users of healthcare, practitioners, managers, researchers, educationalists and policy makers, to actively translate evidence into practice and service improvement. Education and training transcends all of its operations and activities.

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