

HICPAC Isolation Precautions Guideline Workgroup Call

May 11th, 10:00 am ET

Participants

Workgroup: Sharon Wright, Mike Lin, Hilary Babcock, Elaine Dekker, Judith Guzman-Cottrill, Anu Malani, Mark Russi, Connie Steed, Julie Trivedi, Deborah Yokoe

CDC: Mike Bell, Sydney Byrd, Abigail Carlson, Mylaica Conner, Marie de Perio, Jamesa Hogges, Fernanda Lessa, Melissa Schaefer, Devon Schmucker, Christine So, Erin Stone, Matt Stuckey, David Weissman, Laura Wells

Agenda:

- Review and discussion of homework responses
 - Proposed precautions framework
 - High priority/key questions
- Update from the Office of Guidelines and Evidence Review
- Next Steps

Discussion Summary

Review and discussion of proposed precautions framework and high priority/key questions

Dr. Wright led a discussion of the homework responses.

- There are some challenges to work through.
 - How do we balance considering what is available in different healthcare settings when making recommendations, such as using a well-fitting mask vs. a respirator?
 - The existing language around modes of transmission is already weighted, so there is a need for new vocabulary.
- Dr. Bell spoke about first focusing on how an organism causes infection in a person, then concentrating on what to do about it/prevent it.
- The group discussed some proposed categories for modes of transmission and other ideas around framing this guideline.
 - Skin and skin breaks, mucosa, “lungs”
 - Should the term “droplet” no longer be used?
 - Does fecal-oral need to be added to the list?
 - Spread by touch, spread by splashes and sprays, spread by being breathed in, spread by passing or breaking down the body’s defenses
 - Need to think about ways to describe the risk threshold, and expert experience and observation will be necessary where there is no evidence.
 - Risk tolerance for specific infections can evolve depending on the impact on the individual, as far as how sick they get, how many other people they put at risk, what’s the effect on the healthcare system, etc.
 - Instead of identifying an aerosol-generating procedure, is it better to determine the actual risk of transmission from that procedure?
 - The decoupling of the N95 and the negative pressure ventilation has been helpful during COVID.
 - As far as transmission intervention, there should be a focus on engineering controls, in addition to PPE.
 - Duration of air space contamination needs to be considered, along with the distance of transmission.

- There was agreement that the word aerosol is important in describing transmission, but the labels for the modes of transmission should be new because the terms droplet, airborne, aerosol, etc., are charged and polarizing.
- Transmission of a pathogen is not static; it is affected by the pathogen, host immunity, and the environment.
- The group discussed how this guideline, focused on healthcare settings, may influence recommendations focused on preventing infection in the community.
- Indoor air quality, environmental cleaning, etc., is important to address.
- There is a separate effort underway for community infection prevention.
- Certain organisms fall into several transmission buckets.
- The division between inhalation and mucosal could be something that gets past the vocal cords vs. something that has an impact above the vocal cords.
- The group submitted an extensive list of questions that can be discussed more thoroughly at the next meeting.

Update from the Office of Guidelines and Evidence Review

- Ms. Stone gave an update on the scoping literature review for aerosol transmission.
 - 65% complete
 - A bibliography will be available in about three weeks.
- The scoping review on contact transmission will be ready two to three weeks after the aerosol transmission review.
- It was asked if it would be helpful to catalog studies on unusual outbreaks.
 - Yes, as part of defining the spectrum of respiratory infection transmission.

Next Steps

- A strawman framework of the combined homework responses will be created and sent to the group for more input.
- Focus on the priority/key questions to be discussed at the next meeting, and send new questions if you have them.
- The spreadsheet of the scoping review results thus far, along with the questions being asked, will be sent to the group.
- Think about the scoping review questions. Are these the questions we want to ask?

The call adjourned at 11:01 am ET with no additional comments or questions.
The next Workgroup call is scheduled for May 24th, 2022, at 3:00 pm EST.