

HICPAC Isolation Precautions Guideline Workgroup Call

April 11, 2024, 2:00 pm ET

Participants

Workgroup: Mike Lin, Sharon Wright, Hilary Babcock, William Bennett, Lisa Brosseau, Elaine Dekker, Judith Guzman-Cottrill, Robert Harrison, Morgan Katz, Anu Malani, Melissa McDiarmid, Mark Russi, Erica Shenoy, Connie Steed, Julie Trivedi, Deborah Yokoe
CDC: Mike Bell, Sydney Byrd, Marie de Perio, David Kuhar, Melissa Schaefer, Erin Stone, David Weissman, Laura Wells

Agenda

- Attendance and conflicts of interest disclosure
- Recap from last meeting
- Presentation: "Importance of Epidemiological Data to Inform Prevention of Infection in Healthcare Settings"
- Discussion
- Next steps

Discussion Summary

- No new conflicts of interest were disclosed.

Recap from the last meeting

- Dr. Wright recapped the previous meeting discussion around the presentation, "Air Transmission and the Role of Masks vs. Respirators in Minimizing Exposure to Aerosol Transmissible Pathogens."
- WG members discussed if the definition of transmission by air in Section A of the draft could be more clearly defined.
- Members debated if examples of pathogens should be given in Part I of the draft guidance since Part I is intended to be pathogen agnostic.
 - Pathogen-specific recommendations will be in Part II, which will update Appendix A.

Presentation and Discussion

- Today's presentation, "Importance of Epidemiological Data to Inform Prevention of Infection in Healthcare Settings," began by highlighting that the objective of the Isolation Precautions guideline is to ensure the health and safety of patients and healthcare personnel by mitigating the risk of transmission of infection between people in healthcare settings.
- It was noted that the studies presented reflect real-life implementation and outcomes.
- There was a discussion over whether these studies truly reflect real-world implementation or are flawed due to various factors, such as unknown patient respiratory viral status or non-compliance with PPE use.
- The group discussed weighing risk-benefit and what is feasible to implement in healthcare settings.
- There were differing opinions among the attendees regarding the use of surgical masks versus respirators.
 - Some participants highlighted the importance of considering real-world implementation and compliance with mask usage.
 - Others emphasized the need for precautionary measures and higher levels of protection (e.g., NIOSH-approved N95 respirator or higher).

- WG members have not yet come to a consensus on the question, “Should there be a category of Transmission-based Precautions that includes masks (instead of NIOSH Approved® N95® [or higher-level] respirators) for pathogens that spread by the air? Should N95 respirators be recommended for all pathogens that spread by the air?”

Next Steps

- Before the next meeting, WG members were asked to consider whether they envision any pathogen, viral or bacterial, where a surgical mask would be used.
- Review the parts of the draft related to question 2.
- Updating the definition of transmission by air will be discussed at a future meeting.

The call adjourned at 3:04 pm with no additional comments or questions.

The next Workgroup call is scheduled for April 25, 2024, at 2 pm ET.