



LONG-TERM CARE RISK FOR ACQUIRING HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS, PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Nawaf Musaad Aqis ALFaqih^{1*}, Abdulaziz Aqeel Jubayr Alyazidi², Mohammed Sughayyir Fari Alyazidi³, Ali Salem Ibrahim Alfaqih⁴, Ayed Laffy Essa Almuzaini⁵, Mohammed Aedh Omaysh Alghamdi⁶, Mazen Laffy Essa Almuzaini⁷, Saleh Abdulrazaq Rizqan Alfaqih⁸, Mohammed Ali Essa ALFaqih⁹, Abdulmuti Atyan Muayti Alfaqih¹⁰

Abstract:

The morbidity and mortality rates linked with healthcare-related infections in hospitals and other long-term care facilities are significant. Despite the fact that infection prevention and control (IPC) recommendations are clearly defined in the acute care context, there is a lack of information about the usefulness of these guidelines in long-term care facilities (LTCF). As a result, we conducted a literature review to investigate the risk of getting healthcare-associated infections in long-term care settings and the techniques that might be used to avoid these infections. Therefore, the most fundamental and essential IPC measures from the acute care setting, such as standard hygiene measures with hand hygiene and personal protective equipment when it is required, along with a good education for healthcare workers and a surveillance system that is operational, could be the cornerstones of a successful IPC program in long-term care.

¹*Public health Specialist, Public Health, Health surveillance center at king abdulaziz international airport Jeddah

²Public health specialist, Public Health, Health surveillance center at king abdulaziz international airport jeddah

³Public health specialist, Public Health, Health surveillance center at king abdulaziz, international airport jeddah

⁴Public Health Specialist, Public Health, Health surveillance center at king abdulaziz, international airport jeddah

⁵Public health Specialist, Public Health, Health surveillance center at king abdulaziz international airport Jeddah

⁶Public health Specialist, Public Health, Health surveillance center at king abdulaziz international airport Jeddah

⁷Public health Specialist, Public Health, Health surveillance center at king abdulaziz international airport Jeddah

⁸Public health Specialist, Public Health, Health surveillance center at king abdulaziz international airport Jeddah

⁹Public health Specialist, Public Health, Health surveillance center at king abdulaziz international airport Jeddah

¹⁰Pharmacist, Pharmaceutical care management, Alleith General Hospital

***Corresponding Author:** Nawaf Musaad Aqis

*ALFAQIH, Public health Specialist, Public Health, Health surveillance center at king abdulaziz international airport Jeddah

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Introduction:

As a result of underlying chronic illnesses, functional impairment, malnutrition, and polypharmacy, elderly persons have a higher chance of contracting an infection and of experiencing a more severe disease course following infection than other age groups do [1]. This is because elderly people are more likely to already be taking multiple medications. Because of their dependency on care, the fact that they share facilities with other residents, and the fact that they live in a confined environment, elderly individuals who are frail and dwell in long-term care facilities (LTCFs) are particularly at risk of contracting health care-associated infections (HAIs) [2]. Infections that occur in residents of long-term care facilities have been linked to high rates of morbidity and mortality, as well as large costs associated with medical care. The term "health-associated infections" (HAIs) refers to infections that take place after being exposed to health care and frequently, but not always, as a result of an exposure to health care. UTIs, respiratory tract infections, skin or tissue infections, and gastrointestinal infections are the most common types of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) that are reported in long-term care facilities (LTCFs) [3]. Patients are considered to have contracted health care-associated infections (HCAIs) when they contracted an illness while receiving medical treatment. In the past, the term "healthcare-associated infections" (HCAIs) was used to refer to infections that were associated with admission to an acute-care hospital. These infections were formerly known as "nosocomial infections." However, the term has since expanded to encompass infections that are developed in a variety of settings where patients receive medical care, such as long-term care, family medicine clinics, home care, and ambulatory care. HCAIs are infections that manifest themselves for the first time at least forty-eight hours after being admitted to a hospital or within thirty days of receiving medical treatment. According to a number of research, the adverse medication events, healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs), and surgical complications that occur most frequently in hospitalized patients are the most common types of adverse events [4].

With a prevalence ranging from 2.2% to 4.4%, a number of studies that have been conducted on healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) in long-term care settings in a variety of European countries have revealed incidences of HAIs ranging from 2.7 to 11.8 per 1000 resident days [5]. However, it is difficult to compare the occurrences and prevalence that were reported in these studies

because of differences in methodology (for example, the definition of HAIs and the period of follow-up) and the study population/case mix between countries [5].

Review:

At the very least, the risk of getting a healthcare-associated infection (HAI) can be lowered by taking proper infection prevention measures, and the timely identification of sick individuals may help to limit transmission of the virus. The majority of HAIs are presumed to be preventable. Within the context of long-term care facilities (LTCF), infection prevention and control measures have received an increasing amount of attention in recent years [6]. There is a national sentinel surveillance network in the Netherlands that was established in 2009 [6] for the purpose of researching infectious illnesses and HAIs in long-term care facilities.

The United States of America is home to 65,600 long-term care facilities (LTCF) that are subject to regulation. Nearly seventy percent of people who reach the age of sixty-five are anticipated to require long-term care at some time in their lives, and eighteen percent of those who are older will spend more than a year in a nursing facility [7]. The same kind of information is available for Europe, where there are about three million beds for long-term care in nursing and residential care institutions among the twenty-six member states of the European Union for which data are accessible in the year 2020 [8].

HAIs, which stand for healthcare-associated infections, pose a significant risk in both acute and long-term care settings. A range of two percent to four percent of nursing home residents are infected by healthcare-associated infections (HAI), according to point prevalence studies conducted in Switzerland [8]. These data, when taken together, suggest that a significant majority of the population would, at some point in time, be impacted by healthcare-associated infections (HAI) in a long-term care facility, and that there is a critical requirement for effective HAI prevention and control methods in these types of environments. Over the course of the Covid-19 outbreak, it became quite clear that measures to prevent HAI in long-term care were desperately needed [8].

Data are rare for long-term care settings, despite the fact that infection prevention and control (IPC) measures and outcomes are well defined for acute care hospitals in the basic components for infection prevention that are established by the World Health Organization (WHO) [9].

The authors of a comprehensive review that was released in 2019 before to the Covid-19 epidemic were unable to find a set of strategies that might be advocated for the adoption of successful IPC measures. At the time of this study, there were just a few of studies that were of a high quality [9].

There is a lack of clarity regarding the prevalence of particular infectious pathogens in LTCFs. The ease with which specimens can be collected and diagnostic testing can be performed, as well as the likelihood that the results would affect treatment, all contribute to a bias in the frequency of infections that are reported. As a result of the ease with which cultures of urine may be acquired and the frequency with which positive findings are obtained even in the absence of symptoms, the most common infection, known as urinary tract infection (UTI), is also the clinical illness that is overdiagnosed the most frequently [10].

On the other hand, the factors that lead to lower respiratory tract infections (LRTI) are generally not adequately identified. Sputum collection for culture is a challenging task; specimens may be gathered from less than thirty percent of long-term care facility (LTCF) residents who are suffering from pneumonia, and fifty percent of these specimens may be insufficient. It is possible that regular culture and diagnostic testing will not be able to grow many common bacterial respiratory infections that are also quite particular. This is because the majority of viruses are either not easily accessible or not sensitive. The etiology of SSTI is rarely known without the culture of blood or tissue, and it is difficult to differentiate between infection and superficial colonization in the absence of illness. Diarrhea is another major cause of infection in long-term care facilities (LTCFs), and it typically resolves on its own unless *Clostridium difficile* is suspected. In this case, the treatment is typically supportive. Fecal samples are rarely examined for viruses, with the exception of *C. difficile*. This is due to the fact that these tests are often not available, and parasites and other bacterial etiologies are rather uncommon as causes of diarrhea associated with liver and gastrointestinal tract infections [11].

Below, under each entity, we shall explain the organisms that are responsible for the common clinical symptoms that are associated with LTCF. Additional mitigating factors that can influence the prevalence of bacteria, particularly within the LTCF, will also be reviewed. These factors include the prevalence of device use, acquisition in the hospital previous to admission, antecedent use of antibiotics, and the status of the immune system of the host. Bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics tend to originate and flourish in settings such as

hospitals and intensive care units, which are places where the selection pressure of antibiotic use is at its highest. In the environment of long-term care facilities, it is not uncommon for antibiotic-resistant bacteria to colonize. The accurate prediction of which residents who are colonized with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics will develop an infection is an important topic of inquiry [12].

Conclusion:

Due to the aggregated form of the reporting of the reported surveillance data in this study, it is difficult to untangle the effect of prolonged involvement from a mixture of patient and LTCF characteristics. This is because the effect of prolonged participation affects a mixture of patient and LTCF characteristics. Despite the fact that this option for aggregated data at the LTCF level allowed us to maintain the user-friendliness of the monitoring system while simultaneously reducing the amount of work that needed to be done, it may also be interpreted as a restriction of the studies because it is not possible to create direct linkages with risk variables at the client level. Therefore, the most fundamental and essential IPC measures from the acute care setting, such as standard hygiene measures with hand hygiene and personal protective equipment when it is required, along with a good education for healthcare workers and a surveillance system that is operational, could be the cornerstones of a successful IPC program in long-term care. Due to the fact that long-term care facilities are so diverse and their activities are always evolving, it is difficult to define the requirements of each and every institution. On the other hand, a uniform IPC program that any institution could modify to meet its temporary requirements might be a viable strategy that would get a high level of approval from the residents, the Healthcare Workers, and the IPC team.

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