

SEMMELEWEIS PROJECT:TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis: Hungarian physician called the "*savior of mothers*" who discovered that the incidence of puerperal fever could be drastically cut by hand washing. While working at the Vienna General Hospital in Austria in 1847, he discovered that hand washing with chlorinated lime solutions reduced the incidence of fatal puerperal fever from about 20 percent to about one percent.

Measuring hand hygiene compliance practices during the delivery of care historically has been a difficult task because of the resources needed to monitor the practices of many different providers in numerous locations over extended periods of time. To obtain quality data in an efficient yet resource prudent manner, the Semmelweis Project was developed, and empowered patients to be involved in their care by being independent observers of hand hygiene compliance. If your clinical area participates in the Semmelweis Project, you should take these steps to collect and submit data:

1. Let the Infection Control and Epidemiology (ICE) points of contact – Jim Hill and Barbara Gilbert – know that your clinical area will participate in Semmelweis. Barbara will get you the supplies you need, i.e. response boxes and patient observation cards. Jim will track data submission and results.
2. The minimum number of observations submitted by patients per month is 30. Not all patients will complete an observation card; anticipate a 30% return rate. So in order to get 30 observations, approximately 100 cards would need to be passed out. Participation shouldn't be laborious.
3. To collect the data:
 - a. Pick out certain days or weeks of the month, for example, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, or the first and third weeks, that your area will hand out and collect Semmelweis cards.
 - b. Determine how many cards you'll hand out daily, for example, all patients (which may be a good idea for smaller clinics), or three cards per provider per day.
 - c. On those days, briefly tell patients about the purpose of the cards and what they should look for, i.e., hand hygiene by the provider, nurse, and/or other health care worker before providing patient care. Tell patients where to drop the cards when completed. Keep track of the number of cards handed out daily so response rate can be calculated.
4. Gather all completed cards for the calendar month by the 5th day of the following month, and submit them to Infection Control and Epidemiology. For example, submit all completed cards for June by July 5th. Our office is located on 7A, room 024.
5. ICE staff will tally the data and put it on the Infection Control portion of the intranet [<http://sp.tamc.amedd.army.mil/mchk-pv/ice/default.aspx>].

Points of contact are Jim Hill (433-5541) and Barbara Gilbert (433-1612).

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