Ward Clean Wednesday
A team approach to improving environmental cleanliness.

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**Aim**
This project aimed to reduce the rate of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE) incidences and improve environmental cleanliness on E3H.

**Background:**
Following an outbreak of VRE episodes on the orthopaedic ward, the team decided to implement strategies aimed at reducing this infection rate. VRE is a common infection found in healthcare settings and can be of concern for the wellbeing of patients. It is recognised no single identifiable solution exists to reduce the spread of this healthcare associated infection rather a collaborative and multi-solution approach has the best outcomes (ACSQHC, 2011). The Essentials of Care (EoC) process was used to identify areas of improvement and develop sustainable outcomes. This project process was collaboratively inclusive of nursing, medical, domestic and members of the infection control team were also used to develop a project which addressed the rising of incidence of VRE and environmental cleanliness. The outcome was significant improvements in both areas.

**Method**
Through regular screening processes on E3H in July 2015, 8 new cases of VRE were detected. An environmental cleaning audit was undertaken and revealed a compliance rate of only 59% well below the 90% minimum standard. EoC facilitators from E3H used the EoC cycle to explore this issue with both nursing and multidisciplinary staff. Facilitators engaged staff with active learning sessions to critically reflect on issues relating to environmental cleanliness and VRE patients on the ward to collect and feedback data.

**Ward clean Wednesday journey using EoC**

**Results**

<table>
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<th>VRE on E3H 2015 - 2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>2015: total 45 VRE patients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016: total 31 VRE patients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017: total 1 VRE patient.</td>
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- Collaborative involvement of the health care team in the project including managers, infection control and domestic staff.
- Increased staff awareness on infection control and clinical insight about the importance and prevention of VRE incidences on E3H.
- Removal of unused or less frequently used equipment from the ward.
- Allocated protected cleaning time titled ward clean Wednesday driven by ward staff.
- Disposable curtains implemented, single patient use blood pressure cuffs, monthly environmental cleaning audit, weekly patient shared equipment audit.

**Significant decrease in VRE patients:**
- 2015: total 45 VRE patients.
- 2016: total 31 VRE patients.
- 2017: total 1 VRE patient.

**Significant increase in environmental cleaning audits:**
- 2015: lowest 59% highest 95%
- 2016: lowest 82% highest 98%
- 2017: lowest 95% highest 100%

**Conclusion**
As an Orthopaedic/Vascular team, our project encompasses CORE values, empowering staff to suggest solutions for sustainable change and enhance the patient experience.

Using the EoC cycle enabled authentic staff collaboration and sustainable project outcomes. Ward clean Wednesday is a continuous ward project that is evaluated and critically reflected by staff. In 2016 the project was a successful category winner for reducing healthcare associated infections at the NBMLHD quality awards. Including creatively sharing the outcomes in the districts yearly Practice Development Christmas competition.

The ward clean Wednesday project increased environmental cleanliness and a reduction of VRE patients on the ward. Including collaborative productivity and engagement of the entire team to have an active role in the environmental cleanliness of the ward. Using EoC sessions is essential to critically reflect on issues and engage staff to take ownership of the strategies implemented and has empowered and strengthened all staff on E3H as a collaborative team.

**References:**
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) (September 2011), National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards, ACSQHC, Sydney.