



INFECTION CONTROL

Keep Patients Informed, Involved

Patients want to know more about infection control, according to a survey taken at the University of Wisconsin Hospital in Madison.

Researchers gave an interviewer-administered questionnaire to 109 patients with infections caused by multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs), but 9 patients declined or were unable to participate. An infection preventionist generated a list of eligible patients by reviewing daily isolation lists. Patients had to have ≥ 1 MDRO infection from *Clostridium difficile*, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, vancomycin-resistant enterococci, or multidrug-resistant gram-negative bacilli. The researchers developed the questionnaire after reviewing published literature and educational materials from the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology and other national organizations. The questionnaire covered patients' demo-

graphic characteristics, background knowledge of antibiotic-resistant pathogens, and preferences about educational materials.

Nearly all 100 respondents (96%) had heard of MDROs. However, 11% said they did not recall receiving information about isolation precautions during their current hospitalization, and another 11% did not recall being informed about the specific MDRO they had. Of those who were aware of the organism they had tested positive for, 83 had received information about the MDRO from a physician or nurse, with the health care professional usually initiating the conversation.

All but 2 of the patients thought a patient's role in learning about MDRO health care-associated infections was important, and 94% felt getting information about MDROs would help them make choices that would improve their care.

Given that patient education is a staple of patient care, is there a best way to deliver it? Not according to the respondents, who were open to various forms of education. (Respon-

dents were allowed to report multiple answers for this question.) Patients agreed that they preferred materials that displayed "a lot of information"—even a video lasting over 15 minutes. Most (70%) preferred written materials, but 57% also would have liked to receive verbal information, 53% chose an informational video, and 50% preferred Internet-based material.

The researchers also noted that the preferences varied by gender, a finding that may deserve "further exploration because gender differences may be relevant to patient engagement," they say. For instance, men were significantly more likely than were women to want to get information about MDROs from a nurse ($P = .01$) or from an infection disease physician ($P = .04$). Moreover, the type of educational material preferred depended on the patient's level of education, suggesting that a variety of material should be provided, tailored to education and preferences. ●

Source: Gudnadottir U, Fritz J, Zerbel S, Bernardo A, Sethi AK, Safdar N. *Am J Infect Control*. 2013;41(11):955-958.
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