



Hospital Infections The Scare in Hospital Care

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Joseph Lister, an English Physician stressed his concern about wound infections and their prevention. *You must be able to see with your mental eye, the septic elements, as one sees flies and other insects with the mortal eye. If you can, you will be properly on your guard against them" [1].*

During the last century we have witnessed, a rapid mushrooming of hospitals both in the private and public sector, along with a significant change in the role of the hospital from that of nursing sick patients, to that of a health institution, where preventive, promotive and curative care is given, besides being a centre of education, research and training. But these very institutions, which were here to provide relief to the ailing masses, can also become a health hazard in the form of Hospital or Nosocomial Infections.

Nosocomial Infections ((Greek–Noso–disease+ion–to take care of) are infections acquired by the patient while they are in the clinical care facility [2].

Hospital Infection is probably as great a problem today as it was in the pre-antibiotic era. Although antibiotics have reduced mortality, they have failed to alter the prevalence of infections[3]. The financial burden of

Hospital Infections is enormous both to the patient and the hospital. In addition, there is loss of gainful employment as well as associated pain and discomfort from the infections.

The enormity of this problem has led most hospitals to allocate substantial resources to the development of methods and programmes for the surveillance, prevention and control of Nosocomial infections.

Control of Hospital Infection involves a team work of the entire health care system. In order to be effective, every member must be aware of the hazards of infection for better patient care.

Launching a Hospital Infection Control Programme should be a must for all Health Care Centres, right from the District Hospitals to the major Community Health Institutions. Formulation of feasible policies for disinfection measures, antibiotic therapy and waste disposal methods should form an important part of the programme. Organization of seminars, lectures, workshops, and updates on control of Hospital Infections should be an important target to be achieved in the programme.

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Recently, computer software packages have been developed to aid the Infections Control Practitioner. Such packages generate routine reports, cause and effect tabulations and graphics for the daily epidemiological monitoring that must be done.

The expected standards of hospital care are so high in the public mind that complications are simply not accepted. Therefore, it is important that all individuals working in the hospitals conform to procedures and practices that are in keeping with the medical ethics.

In short, it is necessary that any condition that might cause hospital infection, be remedied by an active Infection Control Programme. The ground

realities are, however, far from ideal in most of our hospitals and would need a lot of effort and commitment at all levels.

References

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