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**THE IMPACT OF HCAI'S  
ON CHILDREN**



When a child is admitted to hospital it can be quite a daunting or even scary experience.

Depending on their age, maturity or the nature of their visit to hospital, they may not fully understand why they're being admitted. Or giving them the full story may simply be too upsetting.

Throw in the fact that hospitals can be intimidating places, for the child, being admitted is a big deal.

That's to say, it's a big deal when everything goes to plan.

It's a disaster when it doesn't.

The impact on HCAs on medical facilities is a persistent problem around the world. Containing infection with strictly upheld infection control policies and hand hygiene procedures all go towards preventing patients from becoming more unwell than when they went in.

According to a NICE report, it is estimated that 300,000 patients a year in England alone acquire an HCAI and MRSA was recorded as either the underlying cause or contributing factor to 9,000 deaths in 2007.

In Canada that number drops to 200,000 patients but 8,000 reportedly proved fatal, according to a report published in 2009.

With super bugs like MRSA proving so deadly, protecting children is vitally important.

As has been documented by the British Medical association, clothing can often be carriers of harmful microbes. This can mean where HCAs occur in children the microbes were already on their person prior to entering the ward.

If this is the case then infection control procedure needs to be reviewed to accommodate, where possible, getting children to change into fresh clothes or pyjamas before they enter the ward fully and mix with other individuals.

Other approaches include ultraviolet disinfection technology such as the system adopted by the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital this year to eliminate all bacteria from wards or rooms. Including clothes or any other items left out during the cleaning cycle.

Admittedly, there's nothing stopping the child from picking up an infectious disease once in the ward but if procedures are followed, this should be rare.

What if the unthinkable happens and a child *does* pick up an HCAI following their procedure?

The challenge clinicians have is that whilst 'child' is a convenient catch-all term, the reality is 'child' covers anyone up to the age of 18.


This means there are huge variables in terms of impact, suitable treatments and recovery time.

For example, a healthy and active 17 year old is far more likely to cope with an infection of this type than a seven year old.

However, in the same way that not all children are the same, neither are infections and some need little more intervention and support whilst the body fights the infection off.

The reality is that the younger the patient, the more severe the threat is.

But the infection isn't the only challenge to overcome.



In instances where a serious (even life threatening) condition occurs there can be further complications such as pneumonia or even psychological trauma.

To a child, who was already anxious about going to hospital, being critically ill and hooked up to machines they don't understand is a nightmare made manifest and something likely to stay with them for a long time.

The only way to protect children from serious infection and the long lasting aftermath (not to mention fees and potential legal action) is to tailor the infection control strategy for children's wards accordingly.

Tightening up on hand hygiene and surface contact and regular garment changes for patients and clinicians are all ways of limiting microbes from transferring from clothing or counter tops.

The right sluice/dirty utility room solution that allows clinicians to either quickly and easily dispose of human waste or rinse through soiled garments is also critical to infection control.

When it comes to the most vulnerable and those most heavily impacted by healthcare associated infections, nothing short of complete protection will do.

We work with you to deliver the most comprehensive and robust sluice/dirty utility room solutions in order to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

For more information about our services click [here](#) or contact us today to speak to one of our experts.

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