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**THE COST OF HEALTHCARE  
ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS**



Going into hospital for any length of time can be an anxious experience.

Having an operation, however minor, is scary because whilst the belief is that everything will go well there's a slim chance it couldn't.

However, for all those niggling fears, we go through with the operation and come out the other side a little sore but otherwise on the road to recovery.

Where things go awry is when patients pick up a healthcare associated infection. Whilst these can occur during medical intervention (surgery etc.) the majority can be contracted from the healthcare setting itself.

Outbreaks are a regrettable by-product of an environment full of sick people but robust infection control measures can keep these to a minimum or stamp them out altogether.

Healthcare Associated Infections cost the NHS £1billion a year. Almost 1% of its entire budget goes on reacting to an outbreak that could have been prevented.

This goes on additional care, occupation of hospital beds, the logistics of delaying other people's procedures and the agency staff to replace clinicians who become ill.

£1billion could run the NHS for an addition 3 days. It would also reduce overspend by 30%.

Moreover, last year £56million of that money was spent after the patient was discharged. This was either spent on aftercare that wouldn't have been needed or lawsuits against the hospital.

The harsh reality is that not only are healthcare associated infections manageable and avoidable; they have the potential to be fatal. It's alleged that as many as 5,000 people a year die from HCAs.

Even if the number is (wildly) exaggerated, the public perception is the risk of infection poses almost as great a risk to them as the operation itself. Especially if that person is elderly, an infant or otherwise classified as vulnerable.

This indelible mark on the hospital's reputation as a place of care, when combined with the wasteful cost of additional treatment, litigation, staff sickness and the human fall out can all be put down to an outbreak of a serious infectious disease.

Or, more specifically, a preventable outbreak of a serious infectious disease.

Patients and even residents in the case of care settings, rely on clinicians and carers to follow robust infectious disease protocols and have the best equipment for the job available to them.

It's important for clinicians of all stripes, not just infection control nurses, to assess whether or not they or their facility is meeting infection control best practice.

With £1 in every £40 spent on staff sickness in the NHS, any reduction would be massive. Reductions in outbreaks would be bigger. Cutting the costs of infectious disease outbreak by half could fund 5 of the most advanced hospitals in the world. Or renovate 10 others.

It would also go to cutting a £2.4billion staff sickness bill.



Making sure your facility has the best possible infection control procedures and sluice/dirty utility room provision is vital to ensuring the health and welfare of your patients and clinicians.

DDC Dolphin can provide you with an end-to-end solution for your infection control needs.

Contact us today to discover how we can support you.

**Contact Details: -**

**Tel: +44 (0)1202 731555**

**E-mail: [info@ddcdolphin.com](mailto:info@ddcdolphin.com)**

**Website: [www.ddcdolphin.com](http://www.ddcdolphin.com)**



**DDC Dolphin Ltd, The Fulcrum, Vantage Way, Poole, Dorset, BH12 4NU, United Kingdom.**