

Jhpiego Pioneers Infection Prevention Strategies Worldwide

For more than a decade, Jhpiego has been an international leader in advocating for and implementing evidence-based standards for infection prevention (IP) practices that protect both the client and the health care worker, developing and implementing efforts in more than 40 countries.



Photo courtesy of Pride Project

A health worker in Pakistan takes steps toward proper waste disposal.

Use of appropriate IP practices:

- Reduces the risk of infection and disease transmission to clients
- Protects health care workers at all levels from exposure to life-threatening diseases
- Promotes the use of effective waste management to limit the spread of infection to communities
- Minimizes environmental pollution through appropriate reprocessing of single-use items

By systematically integrating IP into health care initiatives such as family planning, reproductive health, maternal and newborn health, and HIV/AIDS prevention programs, countries may reduce the spread of infectious diseases and reduce the perceived risk of HIV infection for health care providers. Changing perceptions about this risk helps to reduce health care worker attrition and increases the likelihood that sufficient numbers of students will continue to complete basic education to become physicians, nurses, midwives and other types of health personnel.

Several elements are key to Jhpiego's approach to ensuring appropriate practices:

- Development of national IP standards and guidelines based on proven best practices
- Development and use of IP reference and learning materials based on international standards
- Development of national guidelines for training, and adaptation of site-specific service delivery guidelines from international standards
- Development of IP operational performance standards and implementation of these standards through a performance and quality improvement process involving all staff
- Use of inexpensive, locally available materials (such as plastic buckets, bleach and the steamers used in Asia for cooking) to reduce costs associated with IP and remove logistical barriers to improving health care services

Case Study: Malawi

An estimated 780,000 adults aged 15 to 49—about 15 percent of the adult population—are living with HIV/AIDS in Malawi, according to a UNAIDS 2002 report. The rate is much higher in urban areas. With 80,000 total deaths from AIDS reported in 2001, the disease is killing many of the country's most educated and productive citizens, including hundreds of health care professionals. And the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among patients in Malawi hospitals is so high—60 percent, according to some Ministry of Health and Population officials—that nurses and other health care workers deal daily with HIV/AIDS as an issue, no matter what their health specialty area. The government has made improvement of IP practices at hospitals a top priority in its human resources development initiative, sending a strong message to health care professionals and patients about the safety of the health care system.

Jhpiego, with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development, helped Malawi's Ministry of Health and Population and National Quality Assurance Task Force to develop national standards in 2001. The standards have been implemented at seven pilot hospitals, resulting in dramatic improvements in IP practices in just over a year. Jhpiego training in the hospitals fostered improvements in decontamination of medical equipment using chlorine solution, positive changes in traffic patterns and strengthened hand-hygiene techniques. Jhpiego teams trained hospital staff in correct IP techniques such as improvements in handwashing, equipment sterilization and waste disposal. Impressed with the success of Malawi's IP program, other countries in Africa are planning to adopt the same approach.

Jhpiego Steps In

Jhpiego's recently published IP manual, *Infection Prevention Guidelines for Healthcare Facilities with Limited Resources*, offers guidance for hospitals and other facilities providing general, medical, surgical and obstetric services. The manual is supplemented by a learning resource package designed to provide basic IP knowledge and skills to all levels of health care workers in a six-day course. The course can be given as group-based training, adapted for self-directed learning or incorporated into a pre-service education curriculum of clinical training that includes maternal/child health, obstetrics/gynecology, community health, family medicine and general surgery.

Two videos are also available for use with this training package—*Infection Prevention for Healthcare Facilities with Limited Resources: Overview* and *Practical Training Demonstration Segments* and *Safe Practices in the Operating Room*. They describe the importance of IP practices in protecting clients and health care workers, and demonstrate the main steps of processing instruments. A Jhpiego ReproLearn® tutorial (CD-ROM and Web-based), part of the series "Care of Women with HIV Living in Limited-Resource Settings" explains the risks of acquiring HIV and other diseases in health care settings and reviews IP practices to make the workplace safer.

For 35 years, Jhpiego has been committed to improving the health of women and families throughout the world. Jhpiego is dedicated to excellence—ensuring delivery of high-quality services and strengthening human capacity development. As an affiliate of The Johns Hopkins University, Jhpiego draws on the University's extensive expertise to develop innovative responses to the challenges of today's reproductive health needs.

