

PICOT Assignment

Question:

Are AED nurses who use proper PPE more protected from for exposure to infectious diseases than nurses who do not use proper PPE?

Summary:

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is a resource that hospitals use to protect the healthcare workers that they employ. “Personal protective equipment (PPE) is a primary strategy to protect health care personnel (HCP) from infectious diseases” (Bleasdale, Brosseau, Jones, & Maita, (2020, January)). The correct PPE is chosen based on the route of transmission for the infectious disease in order to prevent exposure that can occur when caring for the patient. “Personal protective equipment (PPE) is recommended to protect clinicians from acquiring, or becoming vectors of infection yet compliance is typically sub-optimal. Little is known about factors that influence use of PPE—specifically gloves and masks—during routine care” (Barratt, Gilbert, Hor, Shaban, & Wyer, (2020, June)). Many units in the hospital do not use PPE appropriately but ED workers seem to be less likely to wear the necessary PPE despite the fact that ED staff is one of the highest risk healthcare fields because of the number of patients that are seen each day and the fact that the patients are not likely to have a diagnosis when they are first seen. ED staff frequently use gloves but other PPE items, such as masks, are less appropriately used on a day to day basis. This sub-optimal use of appropriate PPE “increases the risk of occupationally-acquired infection and disease” (Barratt, Gilbert, Hor, Shaban, & Wyer, (2020, June)). PPE, when used appropriately, has been shown to decrease the risk of exposure to infectious diseases and because there is less risk of exposure, the healthcare workers are less at risk for acquiring the infectious diseases that the patients are requiring medical treatment for. “Healthcare workers are at much greater risk of infection than the general population, due to their contact with patients' contaminated body fluids. Personal protective equipment (PPE) can reduce the risk by covering exposed body parts” (Verbeek, Rajamaki, Ijaz, Sauni, Toomey, Blackwood, Kilinc-Balci, (2020, April 15)).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, after reading extensive research about whether or not PPE protects healthcare workers from exposure to infectious diseases, I have found that PPE does in fact protect healthcare workers from exposure if they use PPE when it is supposed to be used and if they put on and take off the PPE appropriately. There have been attempts to modify PPE in order to make it easier to take on and off but that leads to different issues. “Covering more of the body leads to better protection. However, as this is usually associated with increased difficulty in putting on and removing PPE, and the PPE is less comfortable, it may lead to more contamination” (Verbeek, Rajamaki, Ijaz, Sauni, Toomey, Blackwood, Kilinc-Balci, (2020, April 15)). All-in-all, PPE can be a very helpful resource for healthcare workers, especially in the ER, if the hospitals will teach the staff how to appropriately take PPE on and off and which PPE is appropriate for each patient.

Works Cited

Primary Article

Verbeek, J. H., Rajamaki, B., Ijaz, S., Sauni, R., Toomey, E., Blackwood, B., ... Kilinc-Balci, F. (2020, April 15). Personal protective equipment for preventing highly infectious diseases due to exposure to contaminated body fluids in healthcare staff. In *Cochrane Library*. Retrieved from <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD011621.pub4/full>

Secondary Article

Barratt, R., Gilbert, G. L., Hor, S., Shaban, R. Z., & Wyer, M. (2020, June). Enablers of, and barriers to, optimal glove and mask use for routine care in the emergency department: an ethnographic study of Australian clinicians. In *Science Direct*. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2588994X19300806>

Tertiary Article

Bleasdale, S. C., Brosseau, L. M., Jones, R. M., & Maita, D. (2020, January). A systematic risk-based strategy to select personal protective equipment for infectious diseases. In *Science Direct*.

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