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Awareness of Hospital-Acquired Infections and Hand Hygiene Practices Among Patients and Public Attendees at the Radiology Department

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Introduction: Hospital-acquired infections (HAIs), or nosocomial infections, occur within 48 hours of care or 30 days post-discharge. Affecting 1.7 million patients annually, HAIs cause over 98,000 deaths. Hand hygiene plays a vital role in transmission. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines infection control practices (ICP) as methods to reduce infection risks in healthcare settings through prevention and hygiene measures. A better understanding of patients' knowledge and attitudes enhances intervention effectiveness. However, limited research exists on patients' education about ICP and their awareness of HAIs remains underexplored and insufficiently assessed. Therefore, this study aimed to evaluate the HAIs awareness level and hand hygiene practice's level. **Methods:** 145 outpatients and visitors to the radiology department participated in this cross-sectional study. Information on sociodemographic, awareness and knowledge, and hand hygiene practices was gathered using a self-administered questionnaire. A mean score interpretation and correlation coefficient interpretation were used to assess the degree of correlation and awareness between sociodemographic, practice, and awareness factors. **Results:** The descriptive analysis revealed that the mean awareness score for patients and public attendees was very low (1.46), while the mean practice score was medium (3.15). The results of the Pearson correlation test showed a significance value of 0.002 and $r = -0.25$. This suggested that the relationship between awareness and practice was weak but statistically significant. **Conclusions:** In summary, the study revealed that awareness has a negligible effect on the degree of practice of patients and public attendees.

Keywords: hospital-acquired infections, infection control practices, hand hygiene practices, radiology department