
Improving Radiologist Workstation Disinfection Rate



A University of Ottawa study describes how the implementation of daily reminder placards at each workstation and the administration of an educational PowerPoint presentation improved the rate of radiologist workstation disinfection. The study is in press in Canadian Association of Radiologists Journal.

See Also: [Teaching Communication Skills to Radiology Residents](#)

Hand washing and disinfection of medical equipment help prevent the spread of infection within hospitals. Hospital hand hygiene audits tend to focus on high-traffic areas such as the ICU and Emergency Department, while less busy areas such as the Radiology Department often receive little attention. One previous study examined bacterial contamination of portable chest radiographic plates and showed that multiresistant bacteria were frequently transferred from patients to the radiograph machine when improperly disinfected. Another study showed that radiologist workstations had bacterial colonisation counts significantly greater than nearby restroom toilet seats and doorknobs.

The degree of bacterial contamination of the radiologist workstation is potentially significant given that radiologists spend nearly the entire day at the workstation. Radiologists may encounter potential pathogens from a number of sources, such as elevators, door handles, washrooms, or the cafeteria, and may unknowingly contaminate their workstation. Radiology reporting stations are also commonly shared. These factors may increase the risk of microbial transfer from the workstation to the radiologist.

In this single-institution practice quality improvement project, researchers aimed to investigate the workstation disinfection rates and hand hygiene habits of both radiologists and trainees at shared departmental workstations, and to assess the impact of an education campaign and use of reminder placards at workstations on daily habits.

For this study, a 10-question survey was administered to all staff radiologists, fellows, and residents at the institution. The questions pertained to workstation disinfection, hand hygiene habits, and accessibility to disinfectant wipes and hand sanitiser stations. Subsequently, a short educational PowerPoint presentation was emailed to the department to encourage the use of hand sanitiser before and after using the workstation, as well as disinfecting all parts of the workstation using commercially available disinfectant wipes. In addition, small placards made of bright yellow paper stating, "Did you disinfect your workstation today?" were placed at each departmental workstation. A follow-up survey was administered.

Based on the results, the percentage of participants who disinfect their workstations 1-2 times/week, 3-4 times/week or everyday increased from 53.4% (45 of 84 participants) to 74.3% (55 of 74 participants), while the number who disinfect their workstation < 1 time/week or never decreased from 46.4% (39 of 84 participants) to 25.7% (19 of 74 participants). Hand washing rates did not significantly increase.

Following the interventions, the number of staff radiologist sick days per capita decreased compared to the two previous years, the researchers noted.

"In our study, we showed that a short educational PowerPoint presentation and small prominent reminder placards at each workstation influenced radiologist behaviour and increased the degree of workstation disinfection. An online screensaver equivalent to the placard may be a more environmentally sound initiative for future implementation," the authors wrote.

Source: [Canadian Association of Radiologists Journal](#)

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