

Project Title

“I Have Washed My Hands” Campaign

Organisation(s) Involved

Tan Tock Seng Hospital

Project Period

Start date: May 2015

Project Category

Safety, Patient Safety, Workforce Redesign

Keywords

Safety, Workforce Redesign, Workforce Transformation, Informal Workforce, Safe Care, Safety Culture, Patient Safety, Patient Experience, Volunteer & Patient-led, Quality Improvement, Hand Hygiene, Preventive Care, Infection Control, Infection Prevention, Hand Hygiene Compliance Rate, 7 Steps & 5 Moment, Volunteering, Experiential Learning, Patient Empowerment, Volunteer Empowerment, Patient Education, Volunteer Education, Awareness Campaign, Outreach Exercise, Observation Audit, UV Torchlight, Joint Responsibility, Post Campaign Survey, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Infection Control Unit, CareConnect Volunteer Committee, Volunteer Management Office, Volunteer Trainers, Patient Experience Office, Hand Hygiene Ambassadors

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PATIENT SAFETY

Project Title (Maximum 256 Characters): "I Have Washed My Hands" Campaign

Date Project Started: May 5, 2015

Department Name (Maximum 256 Characters): CareConnect Volunteer Committee (CVC) and Infection Control Unit (ICU), TTSH

Names of Key Staff Involved in this Project (Maximum 512 Characters) (Separate names with comma):

CVC: Dr Mark Chan (Co-Chair, also HOD, Department of Geriatrics), Michael Poh (Co-Chair, also Cardiac Rehabilitation Patient Support Group Leader), Eunice Toh (Member, also Director-Development Fund & Volunteer Management Office), Liang Hwee Ting (Member, also Director-Patient Experience Office).

Infection Control Unit, TTSH: Dr Brenda Ang (Chairman)

Hand Hygiene Volunteer Trainers: Dincy Lim (Colon Cancer Patient Support Group Leader), Tan Tai Jong (Prostate Cancer Patient Support Group Leader), Wong See Meng (Pioneer Night Sitter, Volunteer), Robbie Tan (Volunteer).

- 1. Please give some background to the project or programme including how it originated. Give details of how well does the project assure its clientele of the quality and safety of medical care rendered? Outline any specific goals or targets you had in mind prior to the project being put together. Maximum number of words – 350.**

Most patient safety initiatives and campaigns are led by hospital staff; however the “**I Have Washed My Hands**” Campaign in Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) is different — the campaign was volunteer- and patient-led.

It was observed that there was generally low awareness of the importance of hand hygiene amongst staff, visitors and patients. Therefore, it makes sense to improve the awareness level, especially in light of increasing threats of infections transmitted not just locally, but also across borders as people travel more frequently. A campaign was thus organised to boost the hospital’s Infection Control Unit’s efforts at improving and maintaining consistent quality patient safety standards. To do this effectively, a collaboration between TTSH’s Infection Control Unit and its informal taskforce (vis-a-vis volunteers and patient support group leaders) through TTSH’s CVC, was formed. Supported by the Volunteer Management Office (VMO) and the Patient Experience Office (PEO), the campaign aimed to improve the awareness of hand hygiene, instilling responsibility in everyone, reminding staff, patients and visitors that everyone has a part to play in infection control. Not many are aware that patients and visitors can play vital roles. Knowing about and, importantly, practising proper hand hygiene is the cornerstone in infection control: germs can spread from within hospitals to visitors, and vice versa, from visitors to patients and hospital staff. Every individual can play a part in the prevention of infection.

Aim of Campaign:

- Raise awareness of hand hygiene and its importance (**7 Steps and 5 Moments**) amongst staff, patients, their families and visitors.
- Improve hand hygiene compliance rates among clinical and frontline units.
- Promote preventive care with an emphasis on good infection control.
- Promote hand hygiene as an everyday practice and habit.

Target:

- Reach out to a minimum of **5,400 participants** (Staff, patients, care givers, visitors).

Mode:

Rather than passively giving out leaflets, the campaign tapped on trained volunteers as “*Hand Hygiene Ambassadors*”, in an outreach exercise to wards, clinics and public areas to engage people, over 6 weeks, to learn and/or participate in practising the 7-step hand-washing technique and the 5-moments.

(341 words)

- 2. Please describe how the project was beneficial from the patient’s perspective and experience, and how it improved patient safety. Preferably present quantifiable information such as “before and after” measurements and percent improvement of patient safety indicators. (Maximum number of words 300)**

Patients practised the 7-step hand-washing technique through experience, using handrubs with illuminating agent, under the guidance of trained volunteers. Instead of hearing or reading about hand hygiene in theory, they witness first-hand how the 7-steps can ensure all surfaces of their hands are clean, with volunteer ambassadors guiding them through the steps. The use of UV torchlights over their hands reveal areas that have been cleaned. Seeing how well/badly they “washed” their hands provides excellent experiential learning and recall of the 7-step hand-washing technique. Leaflets showing how and when to wash hands and badges were given to all participants.

Volunteers make a positive difference as patients feel less intimidated and more receptive to learning with volunteers. They also help encourage patients and visitors to remind healthcare providers to observe proper hand hygiene during care delivery. Both volunteers and patients are empowered — promoting a joint sense of responsibility towards a safer healthcare environment.

To ensure continuous improvement in patient safety and care delivery, the Infection Control Unit conducts regular Observational Audits where auditors visit all wards to observe staff compliance of the “5 Moments of Hand Hygiene”. A **4% climb** in compliance was observed in the **3 months** following the campaign. This can be attributed to other ground level activities, audits, as well as awareness through the highly visible hospital-wide campaign and participation of staff and patients.

Post-campaign survey observed **93%** of participants found the Campaign effective in raising awareness of the importance of hand hygiene, and **91%** of participants now know more about hand hygiene.

The improved hand hygiene compliance and higher awareness play important roles in patient safety at TTSH. Patients' and visitors' experiential learning and participation reinforce that they too are integral in the control of infection in the hospital.

(292 words)

3. Please explain how well the project assures its clientele of the quality of medical care rendered. Does the project assure better patient safety and help prevent sentinel events (Maximum 250 words)

According to World Health Organization (WHO), "Hand hygiene is the primary measure to reduce infections." To teach/remind as many staff, patients, and visitors about hand hygiene as possible, two Nurse Clinicians from ICU trained, assessed, and certified a dozen Volunteer Trainers for the 7 steps and 5 moments of hand hygiene, who in turn trained **528 Volunteer Ambassadors** for the campaign. They were empowered and given the responsibility to reach out to the community with the 7 steps and 5 moments. The Volunteer Ambassadors engaged **6,832 participants** within TTSH in the 6-week campaign outreach.

Patients are informed that they **can and should remind** healthcare providers to observe proper hand hygiene practices. They are empowered in contributing to how safe their environment is, and consequently how safe they feel. Through the 5 moments, patients learnt when they should expect healthcare providers to use handrubs which are available in the hospital and at the foot of each bed, before coming into contact with them. Through learning about the 7 steps and 5 moments, patients can observe and see that healthcare providers clean their hands effectively too.

With healthcare providers, patients, family, and visitors better educated and observing the 7 steps and 5 moments of hand hygiene, it is evident the hospital takes extra measures to promote patient safety and also prevent the spread of infections.

(223 words)

4. Please give some background to the project team that originated, studied and developed the project or programme. (Maximum Number of words – 200words)

1. CareConnect Volunteer Committee (CVC)

CVC serves as a platform to lend a voice to patients, allowing the hospital and the community to co-create better patient care journeys. CVC, established in 2014, comprise of patients, volunteer leaders, healthcare professionals and community leaders. CareConnect, TTSH's dedicated Patient Experience Centre, was established in 2013 and is the physical embodiment of TTSH's commitment to become better partners with the community. Guided by the three principles of "Engage", "Empower" and "Experience", CareConnect aims to be a one-stop information hub providing patients and caregivers easy access to resources in and out of the hospital.

2. PEO

PEO manages patient education initiatives and activities.

3. VMO

VMO manages TTSH's informal workforce of volunteers, programmes, and facilitate volunteer activities. All new volunteers are trained in hand hygiene during their induction programme before they are allowed to visit/befriend patients in the wards and/or the community.

4. Infection Control Unit (ICU)

ICU plays a vital role in developing and maintaining an effective Infection Prevention and Control Programme for TTSH. The key responsibilities are surveillance, analysis and reporting of infections as well as ensuring patient care delivery follows established standards of care and infection control practice and procedures.

(198 words)

5. Please give any other information, including third party testimonial regarding your project, which you think would help convince the judges that this project (or program) should win this category. Maximum Number of WORDS – 300

1. Mr Wong See Meng, Pioneer Night Sitter, and Member of CVC

“I was encouraged to see how people who were initially sceptical expressing support and enthusiasm after we have conducted our demonstration. I was heartened to see many pledge their commitment to good hand hygiene and do their part to prevent the spread of infection.”

2. Mr TJ Tan, Prostate Cancer Support Group Leader

“Hand hygiene is easy to achieve but also easy to forget. People may revert to old habits and end up spreading diseases without realising. As a patient myself, it is reassuring to know that the hospital is prioritising our safety and involving us in this meaningful endeavour to co-create patient care journeys.”

3. Mr Robbie Tan

“The greatest challenge is asking visitors to the hospital to spend time listening to us about hygiene as many have the impression that hand-washing is difficult, but the satisfaction in knowing that we’ve contributed to their well-being is immense.”

4. Mrs Dincy Lim, Colon Cancer Support Group Leader

“This campaign really creates awareness about how washing your hands properly can save lives. I never expected to learn how to wash my hands at age 82 and I’m glad to be part of this pivotal cause.”

5. Foo Hsien Weng, Student leader, National Junior College

“It’s been a really meaningful journey throughout the Hand Hygiene Campaign because not only have I become more aware of the repercussions of bad hand hygiene, I’ve become a more confident individual when approaching people from all walks of life to spread this cause. Moreover, I feel really great to be able to contribute to a community cause and be able to address some of the most common misconceptions that many may think is insignificant, but in fact, plays a huge part in our lives.”

(300 words)