

INFECTION CONTROL AND STANDARD SAFETY MEASURES IN OBG UNIT

Abstract

Infection control refers to policies and procedures used to minimise the risk of spreading infections, especially in hospitals and human and health care facilities. In obstetrics and gynaecological unit, health care providers must maintain proper hand hygiene. Cleaning, disinfection and sterilization must be done as a routine work in all the obstetrics and gynaecological unit. Hand hygiene stands as the cornerstone of infection prevention, emphasizing the significance of proper handwashing and hand sanitization. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) safeguards both patients and staff during procedures and interactions. Aseptic techniques minimize the risk of introducing infections during medical interventions, and thorough environmental cleaning maintains a clean and safe space.

Keywords: Infections, OBG Unit, Safety measures.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Infection control is the discipline concerned with preventing nosocomial or healthcare associated infection. Infection control is akin to public health practice. Standard and safety measures are set of infection control practices used to prevent transmission of diseases that can be acquired by contact with blood, body fluids, non-intact skin and mucous membranes. Infection control is a set of practices and protocols designed to prevent and manage the spread of infections within the healthcare setting. In our OBG Ward, we follow stringent infection control measures to minimize the risk of infections, safeguard the health of our patients, and create a nurturing environment for mothers and their newborns.¹

II. INFECTION CONTROL IN OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGICAL UNIT

Infection control is crucial in obstetrics and gynecological units to ensure the safety of both patients and healthcare providers. These units are susceptible to various infections due to the presence of numerous patients, invasive procedures, and potential exposure to infectious agents.²

Handwashing is the most critical measure to prevent the spread of infections. All healthcare personnel, including doctors, nurses, and support staff, should perform hand hygiene before and after every patient contact, after handling any potentially contaminated material, and before and after wearing gloves. Proper use of PPE, such as gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection, is essential to protect both patients and healthcare workers from transmission of infections. Regular and thorough cleaning and disinfection of patient rooms, equipment, and frequently touched surfaces are crucial to minimize the risk of infection transmission. Adhering to standard precautions is essential in all patient interactions. These precautions involve treating all body fluids and non-intact skin as potentially infectious. In certain situations, additional precautions may be necessary to prevent the spread of specific infections. For example, contact precautions may be implemented for patients with contagious conditions like methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) or *Clostridioides difficile* infection.

Implementing a comprehensive screening process for infectious diseases in all patients, including pregnant women, can help identify and manage potential risks promptly. If a patient with an infectious condition is identified, appropriate isolation measures should be implemented to prevent the spread of the infection to others. Ensuring that all healthcare personnel and patients are up-to-date with their vaccinations, especially for diseases like influenza and hepatitis B, is crucial in preventing infections. Safe disposal of medical waste, including sharps and infectious materials, is essential to minimize the risk of contamination. Regular training and education of healthcare personnel on infection control practices, new guidelines, and emerging infectious diseases help maintain a high standard of infection prevention. Rational and appropriate use of antibiotics helps prevent the development of antibiotic-resistant infections. Implementing a robust surveillance system to monitor and track healthcare-associated infections can help identify trends and implement necessary interventions. Establishing visitor guidelines that promote infection prevention, such as limiting the number of visitors and ensuring they adhere to hand hygiene and other infection control measures.³

III. STANDARD SAFETY MEASURES IN OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGICAL UNIT

Implement a reliable patient identification process to ensure that each patient is correctly identified before any procedures, treatments, or medications are administered. Emphasize strict handwashing practices for all healthcare personnel to reduce the risk of healthcare-associated infections. Ensure that healthcare workers have access to and use appropriate PPE, such as gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection, when providing patient care or handling potentially infectious materials. Follow standardized protocols for prescribing, dispensing, administering, and documenting medications to prevent medication errors.

Adhere to infection prevention and control measures, including proper cleaning and disinfection of patient rooms and equipment, isolation protocols for infectious patients, and appropriate handling of medical waste. Regularly inspect and maintain all medical equipment to ensure it is in proper working condition and safe to use. Conduct regular drills and training for obstetric emergencies, such as postpartum hemorrhage, shoulder dystocia, and eclampsia, to enhance staff readiness to respond effectively.³ Implement fall prevention strategies for pregnant and postpartum patients, particularly those at higher risk due to medical conditions or recent surgical procedures. Promote effective communication and teamwork among healthcare providers to prevent errors and improve patient safety. Adhere to surgical safety protocols, including surgical site marking, time-out procedures, and correct site verification, to prevent wrong-site surgeries. Follow established protocols for blood transfusions, including proper patient identification, verification, and monitoring during and after transfusions. Regularly monitor the well-being of both the mother and the fetus during pregnancy, labor, and delivery to identify any potential complications promptly. Provide patients with relevant information about their conditions, treatments, and potential risks to empower them to make informed decisions about their care. Ensure that patient rights and autonomy are respected throughout their care, and obtain informed consent for all medical interventions. Develop and maintain an emergency response plan that includes clear protocols for handling various obstetric and gynecological emergencies.²

By implementing these standard safety measures, obstetrics and gynecological units can create a safe and secure environment for patients, healthcare providers, and visitors alike. Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of safety protocols are essential to maintain high-quality care and patient outcomes.

IV. CONCLUSION

Infection control in the Obstetrics and Gynecology (OBG) unit is a critical aspect of healthcare delivery that ensures the safety and well-being of both patients and healthcare professionals. By implementing stringent infection control measures, the OBG unit creates a sterile and nurturing environment for mothers and women seeking care. The practice of isolating infectious patients, when necessary, prevents cross-contamination and the spread of infections. Keeping healthcare professionals up-to-date with vaccinations adds another layer of protection for patients and staff alike.

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