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## Automated and electronically assisted hand hygiene monitoring systems: A systematic review

Melissa A. Ward MS<sup>a</sup>, Marin L. Schweizer PhD<sup>a,b</sup>, Philip M. Polgreen MD, MPH<sup>a</sup>, Kalpana Gupta MD, MPH<sup>c,d</sup>, Heather S. Reisinger PhD<sup>a,b</sup>, Eli N. Perencevich MD, MS<sup>a,b,\*</sup>

Key Word: Hand hygiene **Background:** Hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to prevent transmission of health careassociated infections. Electronic systems and tools are being developed to enhance hand hygiene compliance monitoring. Our systematic review assesses the existing evidence surrounding the adoption and accuracy of automated systems or electronically enhanced direct observations and also reviews the effectiveness of such systems in health care settings.

**Methods:** We systematically reviewed PubMed for articles published between January 1, 2000, and March 31, 2013, containing the terms *hand* AND *hygiene* or *hand* AND *disinfection* or *handwashing*. Resulting articles were reviewed to determine if an electronic system was used.

**Results:** We identified 42 articles for inclusion. Four types of systems were identified: electronically assisted/enhanced direct observation, video-monitored direct observation systems, electronic dispenser counters, and automated hand hygiene monitoring networks. Fewer than 20% of articles identified included calculations for efficiency or accuracy.

**Conclusions:** Limited data are currently available to recommend adoption of specific automatic or electronically assisted hand hygiene surveillance systems. Future studies should be undertaken that assess the accuracy, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of such systems. Given the restricted clinical and infection prevention budgets of most facilities, cost-effectiveness analysis of specific systems will be required before these systems are widely adopted.

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Health care worker (HCW) compliance with hand hygiene is universally acknowledged as important in preventing transmission of health care-associated infections (HAIs). However, compliance has not risen to acceptable levels. Covert direct observation of hand hygiene by a trained observer is considered the gold-standard

E-mail address: eli.perencevich@va.gov (E.N. Perencevich).

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monitoring method but can be time-consuming, costly, limited, and subject to bias.  $^{3}$ 

A wide-range of electronic or electronically assisted hand hygiene monitoring systems are being developed.<sup>4</sup> Current technologies include automated counting systems (eg, counters in pump bottles), enhanced direct observation by a human observer, video monitoring, and fully automated monitoring systems. Fully automated systems generally include a wearable/mobile component, ways to record all hand hygiene opportunities, provision of a feedback or reminder system, and, ideally, responses to HCWs' behavior and actions.<sup>5</sup> A 2009 survey by Braun et al<sup>6</sup> found that 8 of 220 responding facilities (4%) used an automatic monitoring system, whereas 18% used a manual data collection system enhanced by technology.

However, there are significant costs associated with electronic and automated hand hygiene systems, particularly if implemented hospital-wide, without a guarantee that their measurements are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> Department of Internal Medicine, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, Iowa City, IA

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>b</sup> Iowa City VA Health Care System, Iowa City, IA

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>c</sup>VA Boston Health Care System, West Roxbury, MA

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>d</sup> Boston University School of Medicine, Jamaica Plain, MA

<sup>\*</sup> Address correspondence to Eli N. Perencevich, MD, MS, Center for Comprehensive Access and Delivery Research and Evaluation, Iowa City VA Health Care System, 601 Hwy 6 W, Iowa City, IA 52246.

**Table 1**Description of noteworthy studies stratified by surveillance methodology assessed

| Method  | Study design   | Result  | Cost   | Effectiveness/limitations   |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Electronically assisted/enhanced direct observation                   |  |   |  |   |
| Chen et al, 2013 <sup>27</sup>  | Implementation-effectiveness                             | Standardized, electronically assisted<br>directly observed auditing program<br>implemented; compliance increased<br>from 50%-86%  | Not noted; application developed in-<br>house  | Time-stamped data allowed investigators<br>to correct for bias (eg, Hawthorne);<br>program increased total number of<br>observations from 75-100 to 90,538/<br>year   |
| Video-monitored direct observation<br>Davis, 2010 <sup>28</sup>       | Quasi-experimental                                       | Intervention of reminders and posters increased compliance from 24%-62%   | Not noted  | Patient privacy an issue; video camera<br>captured all entrances to the<br>department by staff, visitors, and<br>patients   |
| Armellino et al, 2012 <sup>29</sup>                                   | Quasi-experimental                                       | Increase in compliance from 6.5%-81.6%<br>after remote video monitoring and<br>compliance feedback implemented  | Installation of video cameras at cost of<br>\$50,000 for 1 unit, salaries for round-<br>the-clock, off-site auditors not noted | Patient privacy at issue; video camera had<br>wide enough angle to detail job<br>category of HCW on room entry/exit   |
| Electronic dispenser counters<br>Larson et al, 2000 <sup>32</sup>     | Quasi-experimental with a nonequivalent control hospital | Mean HH/patient-care day higher at<br>intervention hospital following an<br>organizational climate change<br>intervention (RR, 2.1; 95% CI,<br>1.99-2.21 on 6-mo follow-up)   | Not noted  | HH frequency only monitored using counting devices in soap dispensers; not validated with in-person direct-observation  |
| Kinsella et al, 2007 <sup>34</sup>                                    | Observational  | Frequency of ABHR dispenser use varied by location and time of day  | Not noted  | Counters provided time-stamped data;<br>results may have been confounded by<br>use of personal ABHR dispensers  |
| Koff et al, 2009 <sup>38</sup>  | Quasi-experimental                                       | Introduction of personal ABHR dispenser significantly increased HHDE ( $P < .002$ ), decreased contamination of IV tubing ( $P < .01$ ), decreased postoperative HAI ( $P = .02$ )  | Device commercially available, cost not specified  | Sensitivity of electronic counter in device<br>compared with direct observation not<br>noted  |
| Koff et al, 2011 <sup>37</sup>  | Quasi-experimental                                       | Introduction of multimodal intervention and personal ABHR dispenser resulted in a reduction of VAP ( $P < .01$ )  | Device commercially available, cost not specified  | Number of staff using personal ABHR voluntarily decreased from 20/shift to 8/shift during intervention period; device sensitivity not noted   |
| Marra et al, 2010 <sup>41</sup>                                       | Observational  | There was no significant correlation between the rate of directly observed HH compliance and the mean number of HH dispensing episodes per patient-day ( $r = .27$ ; $P = .40$ ).   | Not noted  | Time-stamped data useful in monitoring increases in HH frequency and timing of HH in relation to other electronic nursing data; validation with in-person direct observation noted data from electronic counters better estimated HH compliance |
| Morgan et al, 2012 <sup>46</sup>                                      | Quasi-experimental                                       | Electronic bottle counters noted significant increase in HH frequency ( $P < .001$ ) that was not observed using in-person direct observation ( $P > .05$ )   | \$30,000-\$40,000 for installation per<br>patient care unit  | Data from electronic bottle counters only weakly correlated with data from in-person direct observation and also provided data across all shifts and all days of the week but found 100% agreement during prestudy period                       |
| Automated HH monitoring networks<br>Swoboda et al, 2004 <sup>51</sup> | Quasi-experimental                                       | Compliance during phase 1 noted to be 44% via in-person direct observation versus 21.6% recorded by the network. When accompanied by voice prompts, electronic monitoring improved compliance (OR, 1.38; 95% CI, 1.04-1.83) | Not noted  | Difference attributed to observer only recording hand hygiene opportunities if HCW interacted with the patient, whereas the network recorded all opportunities regardless of situation or patient-care role                                     |

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