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4 **Running title: Surface contact count as an indicator of hand hygiene**

## 5 **Summary:**

6 This study quantifies relationships between hand hygiene and the frequency with which  
7 healthcare workers (HCWs) touch surfaces in patient rooms.

8 Surface contacts and hand hygiene were recorded in a single-bed UK hospital ward for six  
9 care types. Surface contacts often formed non-random patterns, but hygiene before or after  
10 patient contact depends significantly on care-type ( $p=0.001$ ). Hygiene likelihood correlated  
11 with the number of surface contacts (CI 1.1-5.8,  $p=0.002$ ), but not time spent in the room.

12 This highlights that a potential subconscious need for hand hygiene may have developed in  
13 HCWs, which may support and help focus future hygiene education programmes.

14 **Keywords: Hospital acquired infection, hand hygiene, surface contacts**

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