

**KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, BELIEFS AND PRACTICES
OF HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL, ON THE USE OF DISINFECTANTS
IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES IN JAMAICA**

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The study of the knowledge, attitudes and practices on the use of disinfectants in health care institutions was conducted during February and March 1993.

The study sought to determine baseline data and to compare the pattern of usage by users of these chemicals as related to infection control measures.

This cross-sectional study focused on the different categories of health care personnel who are directly responsible for the distribution, maintenance and uses of disinfectants and antiseptics in hospitals and health centres. Twelve institutions (6 hospitals and 6 health centres) of the various types were selected by taking a stratified, systematic sample with random starting point. Self administered and face to face interviews were carried out using a questionnaire.

Two hundred health care personnel were selected, 176 responded, a response rate of 88%. The none responses were mainly from the self administered category. Marginal

interviewees showed reluctance and abstained. The data indicated low ratings on the overall knowledge and attitudes of health care personnel. The results have shown statistical significance in some of these responses, for example: (a) the definition of disinfectant and antiseptic. (b) the recommended strength and minimum contact times documented for the three most frequently used disinfectants and antiseptics. This knowledge is especially useful as this will alleviate mis-appropriateness in the use of these chemicals. Health care personnel exhibited positive attitudes in the use of disinfectants and antiseptics as infection control measures. However, these positive attitudes did not coincide with the observed practices. Differences were observed in attitudes among the various groups. For example: The question of the most important characteristic of a disinfectant/antiseptic, 78% - 84% identified germicidal (killing effect) as the most important. 4% - 17%, (especially of the ancillary group) regarded the smell as the most important. The study presents very important implications for ongoing efforts in prevention and control of infections in health care facilities in Jamaica. This study has revealed the necessity for improvement of serious deficiencies in some crucial areas, especially in the services of disinfection and cleaning measures.