

PICNet

Provincial Infection Control Network – BC “Debugging Healthcare Together!”

Report from the ‘Scientific Working Meeting on Occupational Influenza Prevention and Control in Health Care Settings’, October 26 and 27th Toronto

The purpose of the meeting was to bring experts in infection control, occupational health, aerobiology, health care workers' representative, and occupational safety associations for discussion regarding facial protection during pandemic influenza. This was not a consensus conference but rather an open forum for discussing areas of controversy particularly regarding appropriate respiratory protection. Dr. Elizabeth Bryce represented PICNet at the meeting. Speakers were:

1. Dr. Michael Tapper: Presented general information about pandemic influenza.
2. Dr. Trevor-Deustch, CIHR ethicist: Discussed the ethical framework for decision making when evidence is unclear.
3. Dr. Mark Nicas, aerobiologist U of California: Presented data suggesting that aerosols and droplets play a role in transmission of influenza particularly at close range.
4. Dr. Jennifer Goy, Dr. Dick Zoutman: Reviewed the literature re airborne transmission of influenza.
5. Dr. Michael Gardam: Reviewed literature related to modes of transmission for influenza.
6. Dr. Mary Chamberland, CDC: Reviewed changes made to pandemic guidelines October 2006 to include respirators for aerosol generating procedures and the suggestion that they may be "prudent" when providing direct patient care.
7. Dr. Nick Phin, UK Pandemic Influenza Office: Guidelines based on large droplet and contact transmission with aerosols not considered to be a significant contributor.
8. Dr. Carmen Lucia Pessoa da Silvea, WHO: WHO recommends risk assessment and risk management approach with respirators recommended for aerosol generating procedures.
9. Lisa Brosseau, U of Minnesota, School of Public Health: Reviewed studies comparing surgical masks and respirators, FDA approval versus NIOSH certification. Concluded that there is a wide range of filter efficiency of masks, that FDA requirements are less stringent than NIOSH, that surgical masks should not be considered a protective respiratory device.
10. Dr. Mary Vearncombe (Sunnybrook Hospital) and Dr. George Astrakianakis (OHSAH): Compared and contrasted infection control to occupational health in terms of philosophies of approach.
11. Dr. Elizabeth Bryce (Vancouver Coastal Health): Reviewed the hierarchy of occupational/infection control interventions and factors affecting behavior and intention to comply with recommendations for PPE.

The themes that emerged from the meeting (as interpreted by Dr. Bryce) were:

1. The relative role of droplets, aerosol (droplet nuclei) and contact transmission in influenza spread is unknown. Aerosols likely play a role in transmission over short distance, but their role over long distances is unknown.

2. Infection Control and Occupational Health differ in their definitions of respirable droplet size with Infection Control defining respirable droplets as less than 5 microns in size and Occupational Health defining this as less than 100 microns. The latter definition is based on evidence to support larger droplets quickly evaporating to respirable size while the Infection Control definition is based on what particle size is likely to reach the lower respiratory tract.
3. CDC and WHO have revised their guidelines to address the possibility of aerosols as a source of transmission, recommending respirators for aerosol generating procedures, and with CDC suggesting that respirators may be prudent for direct patient care.
4. In the hierarchy of infection control and occupational health interventions, PPE is at the lowest rung of prevention. More attention needs to be paid to engineering and administrative controls in prevention of all potentially communicable infections.
5. Respirators are a more effective barrier to small particles than surgical masks; however, the incremental benefit is unknown and is likely confounded by host factors and the individual organism they are exposed to.

Shirley Paton announced at the conclusion of the meeting that there would be a summary available in December and that Annex F of the Pandemic Influenza Plan will be reviewed in late December/early January.

PICNet at the Public Health Association of BC Conference

PICNet was represented at the recent PHA-BC conference held in Vancouver November 26-28. PICNet Management Office (PMO) hosted an information booth. Much interest was generated and many new contacts were made among our Public Health partners. Thanks to the hard work of the Communications Leadership Group and PMO members, PICNet was able to present a very attractive and eye-catching booth with our new display panels!

PICNet Needs Assessment Process – Moving Ahead

The formal results of the PICNet assessment of Infection Control Resources have now been presented to the Regional Infection Control Committees from the five geographical regions in British Columbia. The NAWG held a face-to-face on Wednesday, November 1st. At that meeting the group agreed to correct any inaccuracies that were noted in the data presented in the original document. Infection Control leaders from each Health Authority have been asked to provide these corrections to the PICNet Management Office.

At the November 1st meeting, the group members worked through an exercise to identify the key players involved in infection control. The results of this exercise will be used to identify roles and responsibilities and core requirements for infection control programs across the continuum of care.

Seasonal Febrile Respiratory Illness Outbreak Prevention and Control Guidelines

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of its members, the RI working group is approaching completion of its project. Feedback from some members of the PICNet Steering Committee was the catalyst for renewed discussions regarding the personal protective equipment to be recommended based on current literature. A thorough re-review of current expert recommendations, systematic reviews and studies on the topic, as well as a half-day working group meeting enabled us to reach key decisions regarding changes to the document. During the month of December, the final draft of the Respiratory Outbreak Prevention and Management Guidelines will be drafted, reviewed by the working group and sent to the PICNet Steering Committee for endorsement.

Communications Leadership Group

The Communications Leadership Group meets monthly to address communications priorities for PICNet. Projects underway include:

- Web site redesign – The group reviewed ‘mock-ups’ for the redesign. The goal is to launch the new site in the New Year after approval for the redesign has been received from the Steering Committee.
- Office of the Auditor General Report communication plan – A draft communications plan to assist PICNet and the Health Authorities to respond to the OAG’s report on Infection Control in BC has been prepared and will be presented to the PICNet Steering Committee in December. The report is expected to be released publicly in February 2007. PICNet will act as a resource to the Health Authorities as they respond to the report. Thanks to hard work and time contributed by many PICNet volunteers and the many initiatives taken forward, we will be well prepared to respond to this report.

Surgical Site Infections Surveillance Working Group

The SSI Working Group has finalized their report on a framework for surgical site infection surveillance. The report has been forwarded to the Steering Committee for review and will be discussed at the upcoming Steering Committee meeting in December.

PICNet Stakeholders Summit Planning Committee

The first meeting of PICNet’s Stakeholder Summit Planning Committee was held on November 23, 2006. The planning committee members are:

Catherine Munford – VIHA
Janice DeHeer – IHA
Tracey Lanier – IHA
Diane Moran – FHA
Darlene Spence – PHSA
Sarah Pugh – PICNet
Margaret Litt - PICNet

The planning committee agreed that the next meeting will be a 2 day event at the end of April with the first day focusing on PICNet working group updates and the second day focusing on education. **Anyone who has a particular topic that they wish the planning committee consider for the educational day, please send your recommendation to: picnet@bccdc.ca.** A formal announcement with all the details about the upcoming meeting will be issued to all PICNet Stakeholders before the end of January.

Project Priority and Planning Committee (P3)

The P3 committee finalized the PICNet Project Proposal Form and the process by which all project proposals to PICNet will be handled. Any stakeholder who wishes to make a project request to PICNet now has a common form to complete. All requests must be submitted before March 31st of a given year to be considered by the P3 committee in the upcoming fiscal year (April – March). The PICNet Steering Committee then reviews the P3’s recommendations and will make the final decision as to what projects PICNet will focus on in the upcoming year. The PICNet Project Proposal Form is currently available by contacting PICNet at picnet@bccdc.ca

Webber Training Debrief

Since February 2006 PICNet has hosted educational classes offered by Webber Training (<http://webbertraining.com/schedulep1.php>). These classes address topics of interest to infection control professionals and other health care professionals worldwide. The chart below provides an overview of the upcoming teleclasses in the month of December.

Date:	Topic of Interest:	Presenter:
December 7, 2006	Preventing Central Line Associated Infections	Robert Garcia, Brookdale University Medical Center
December 14, 2006	Clostridium difficile – Where are We Now	Dr. Michelle Alfa, St. Boniface Hospital, Winnipeg

Upcoming PICNet Meetings

Meeting	Date
Steering Committee	December 5
Communications Leadership Group	December 13
Project Priority and Planning Committee	January 25
PICNet's Stakeholders Summit Planning Committee	January 24

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