

# Infection Control: Then and Now - Ensuring Proper Infection Control Practice Before, During, and After the COVID-19 Pandemic

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**Topic:** Leading & Advancing Improvements in Health, Health Care, & Higher Education

**Category:** Quality Improvement/Evidence-Based Practice Project

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## Abstract

### Background/Introduction

In late 2019, just months prior to the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic, a study was performed at a local hospital across multiple active medical-surgical units. Aimed at observing the current rate of infection control compliance by nurses, handwashing and PPE use observations were performed. The data collected from these observations was analyzed in order to identify deficiencies in current infection control practices. A gap was found regarding infection control practices on live inpatient units and current CDC standards.

### Purpose

Unknowningly, the world was on the precipice of one of the most deadly global pandemics in history. How did the infection control practices change once COVID-19 cases were added to the patient assignment? Were educational opportunities provided to nurses to update their knowledge on changing CDC standards? Have additional observations been performed? How can nurse leaders ensure that appropriate infection control practices are being carried out?

### Methods or Processes/Procedures

In October 2019, observations of Registered Nurses performing hand hygiene and PPE use during their regular patient care tasks were performed on three inpatient units. In 2022, follow up was completed with these units regarding current infection control practices.

### Results

Follow up found that some additional infection control education was provided, mainly focused on COVID-19. There is a continued use of electronic hand hygiene monitoring with no additional live observations. Unit managers expressed notable increase in awareness of and compliance with infection control practices during COVID-19 pandemic care.

### Limitations

Unfortunately there was a low response rate from managers and staff regarding current infection control practice. Additionally, the process to obtain electronic hand hygiene monitoring results from the hospital is extensive.

### Conclusions/Implications for Practice

This study emphasizes the importance of continuing education and awareness of current CDC standards before, during, and after a global pandemic.

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## Biography

Marisa Francis, DNP, RN, CNE, CLC, has been teaching at The University of New Mexico (UNM) College of Nursing since August 2014. She was promoted to a Principal Lecturer rank in 2022 and teaches in the undergraduate and graduate programs. Her areas of expertise include breastfeeding, patient education, emergency department nursing, veteran's health, and oncology. She holds certifications in nursing education and chemotherapy/immunotherapy administration. Dr. Francis is also a certified lactation counselor. Marisa received her MSN and BSN degrees from UNM and her DNP degree at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

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