

Hand Hygiene Wipes for Patients – a pilot study, following a VRE van A outbreak

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Background

Effective health care worker (HCW) hand hygiene practices are vital in the prevention of health care associated infections and the transmission of antimicrobial resistance, yet little focus is placed on patient centered approaches to infection prevention and control.

Results from a routine Vancomycin resistant enterococci (VRE) hospital wide point prevalence survey at Austin Hospital showed higher than expected patient colonisation of VRE van A in one ward. This led to environmental site screening with detection of VRE van A on several sites.

Introduction of hand hygiene wipes (HHW) for patient use prior to meals was initiated as part of a multi modal strategy to control and contain the outbreak.

Aims

The aim of this pilot study was:

1. To introduce the HHW for a three week period for patients in our outbreak ward
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of HHW in reducing VRE van A transmission in the outbreak ward
3. To explore the potential of introducing HHW across the organisation

Methods

The pilot study involved:

- Introduction of HHW for all patients on the outbreak ward on meal trays for a three week period starting from 26/11/2018
- Feedback was collected from evaluation forms from patients and HCW on the HHW pilot study
- Ongoing screening for VRE van A in patients and the environment was conducted on the outbreak ward.

Lessons Learnt

- Change in practice is achievable
- Front line staff are key to any successful practice change
- Data is an invaluable tool to lead and promote change
- Greater education to end users leads to successful practice change

Results

- Four weeks post the introduction of HHW, no new patient cases of VRE van A were detected, see figure 1, however a commode chair was found to be contaminated with VRE van A. This highlights the importance of cleaning shared patient equipment and encouraging hand hygiene for patients post toileting.
- Monthly screening of patients and the environment continued until no new VRE van A was detected.
- After completion of the three week pilot study, feedback was positive from patients and HCW.
- One of the common themes from HCW was that further education was needed for patients on the use of hand hygiene wipes.

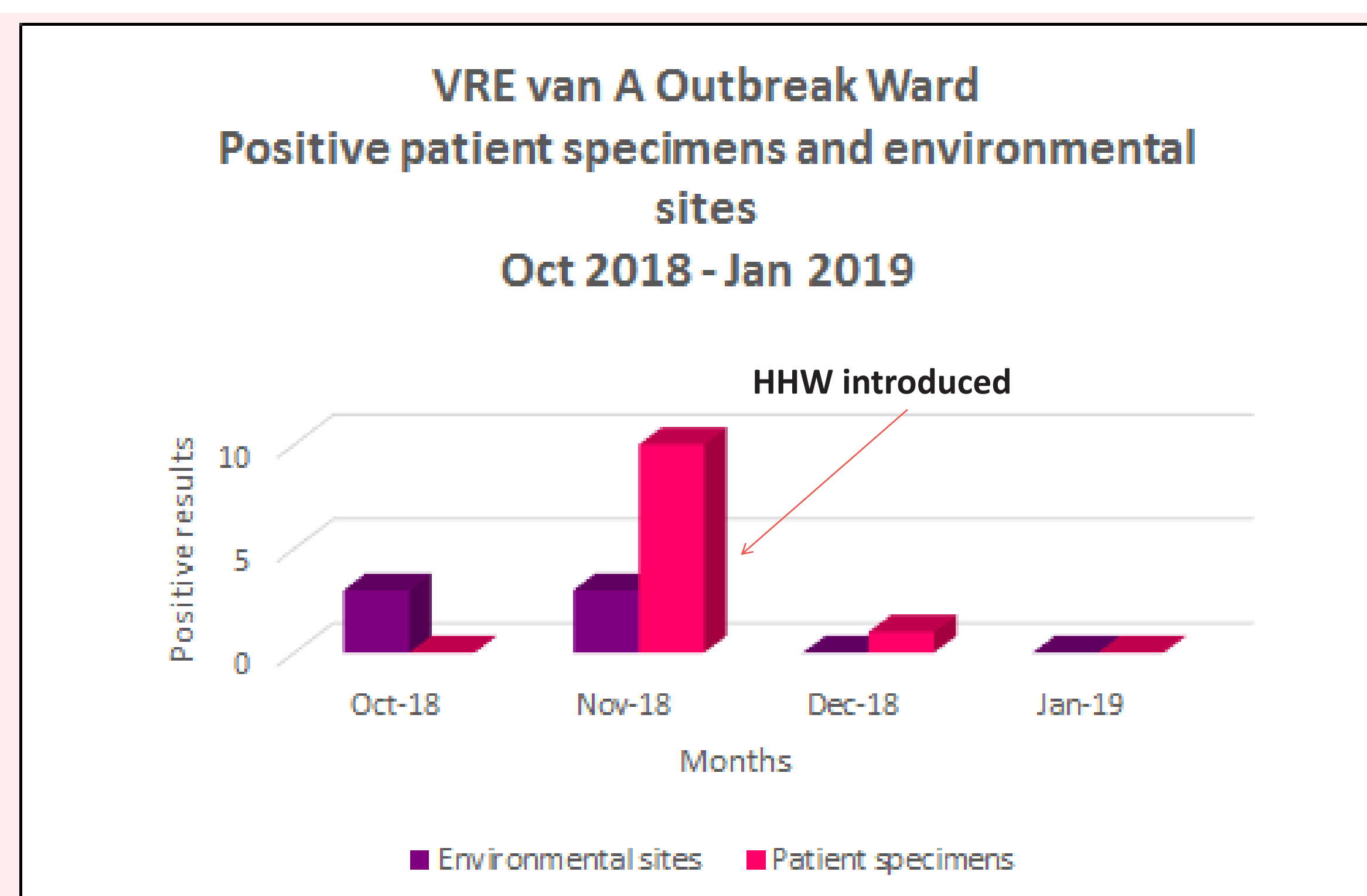


Figure 1. Showing the comparison between VRE van A detection amongst the environment and patients

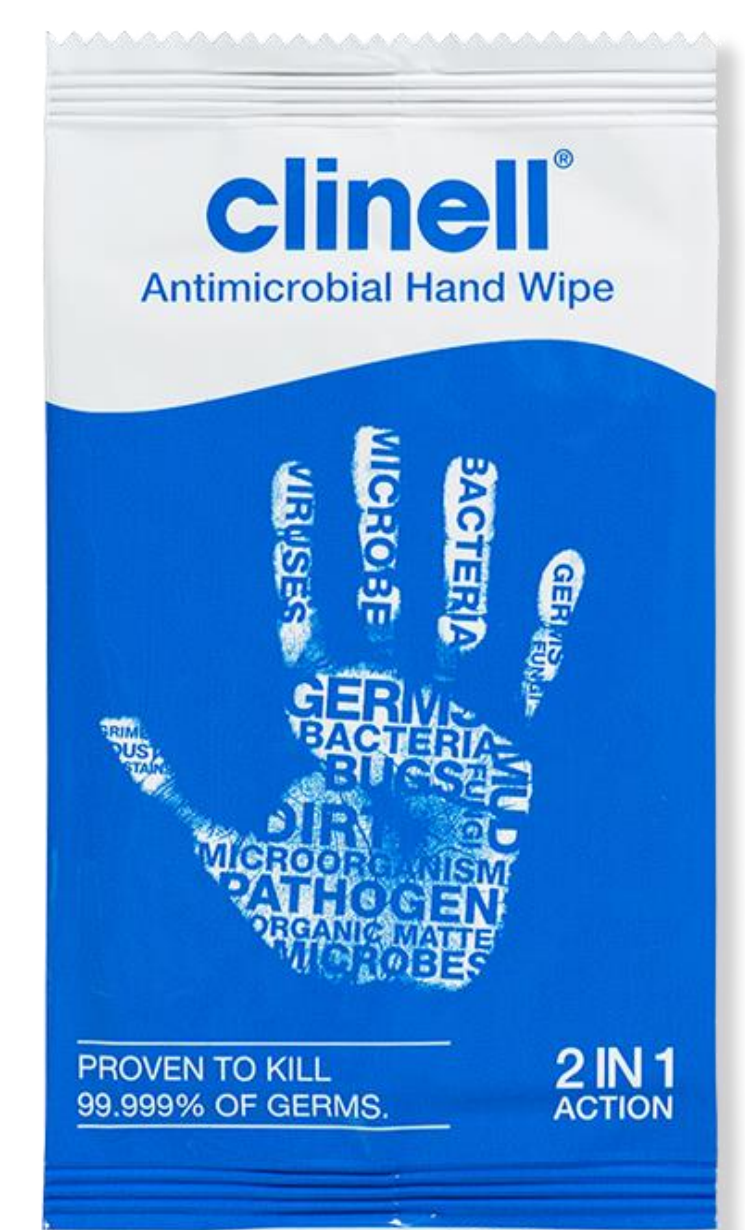


Figure 2. Hand Hygiene wipes provided prior to meals for patients in the VRE van A outbreak ward

Patient and HCW feedback

- “need to help patients open the hand wipes”
- “keep the hand wipes coming on the meal trays”
- “love them, needed more education about hand wipes”

Conclusion

The use of HHW for patients prior to meals was one of the strategies used in a multi modal approach which led to elimination of ongoing transmission of VRE van A in the outbreak ward.

Where to from here

1. Planning is underway to introduce the HHW across the organisation.
2. Discussions about the logistics of introducing the HHW across the organisation are currently in progress with Executives and the Clinical Products Evaluation Committee.
3. Monitoring of patient specimens and environmental sites for VRE van A is ongoing.

References

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