

Risk Assessment for Use of Alcohol-Based Hand Rubs in Healthcare Facilities

Introduction

Improving hand hygiene among healthcare workers (HCW) is currently the single most effective intervention to reduce the risk of hospital-acquired infections in Australian hospitals. One way in which HCWs improve their hand hygiene practices is through the regular use of alcohol-based hand rubs at the point-of-care. There are a number of risks to patients and staff associated with the use of alcohol hand rub, **however the benefits in terms of its use far outweigh the risks**. Risk assessment should be undertaken and a management plan put in place. This particularly applies to clinical areas managing patients with alcohol use disorder and patients at risk of deliberate self harm.

The Risk Assessment below is provided as a generic guide and includes common issues that need to be addressed in all healthcare facilities. Use of this Risk Assessment may assist in addressing these issues to ensure appropriate use and placement of alcohol-based hand rubs at the point-of-care.

Risk Assessment Worksheet

Task	Storage & use of generic alcohol based hand rubs (ABHR)	Risk Assessment Completed by:	HHA Team
Date assessed	January 2009		

Potential Hazards	Likelihood (Rare/Almost Certain?)	Consequence (What can happen?)	Risk Rating (Inherent)	Risk Treatment	Risk Rating (Residual)
Splash	Unlikely Considered unlikely during normal use.	Minor/moderate Minor injury <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irritation of eyes Moderate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corneal damage (refer to WHO Guidelines ¹)	Low	Elimination: N/A Substitution: N/A Engineering: Design and placement of hand dispensers minimises the risk of a splash incident. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metered dose dispenser Splash/drip tray Appropriate dispenser locations, (i.e. dispensers can be mounted on walls out of the reach of children or in supervised locations. Refer HHA manual Appendix 3). Avoid placing at eye level Do not place on head of bed Maximum bottle size of 500mL, no decanting of bottles is allowed 	Low