SECTION 15
GUIDANCE ON UNIFORMS AND CLOTHING WORN IN THE DELIVERY OF RESIDENT/CLIENT CARE

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Introduction
There is no conclusive evidence that uniforms (or other work clothes) pose a significant risk in terms of cross-infection.

Purpose
The purpose of this guideline is to provide infection prevention and control advice to staff on uniforms and clothing worn during direct client/resident care in community based settings, residential settings and client’s home. These recommendations should be incorporated into local uniform and dress code policies.

Recommendations
The following are evidenced based recommendations on uniforms and clothing worn in the delivery of direct care:

- Wear short or turned up sleeves uniform/clothes. Cardigans are not permitted during direct care. Cuffs are more likely to become contaminated during direct care and make effective hand hygiene more difficult.
- Finger nails should be kept short, smooth, clean and free of nail varnish and false nails.
- Restrict jewellery to one flat/wedding ring.
- Change uniform/clothes immediately if they become visibly contaminated e.g. splashed with blood or body fluids.
- Uniform/clothing should not be regarded as personal protective equipment. Thus plastic aprons/gowns must be used to protect uniforms/clothing from contamination with blood or body fluids during direct care activities e.g. wound dressings.
- Hand hygiene must be performed after removing personal protective equipment and uniforms/work clothing.
- Cardigans/coats worn should be washable and laundered regularly. Remove before direct care.
- Designated changing facilities including a shower should be available for staff.
- Wash uniforms/clothes at the hottest temperature for the fabric.
  - Machine wash uniforms/clothes for 10 minutes at 60° C using detergent which removes almost all micro-organisms including *Clostridium difficile* spores to a negligible level.
  - Washing with detergents at 30° C will remove most gram positive micro-organisms including all MRSA.

Good Practice
The following are examples of good practice:

- Wear enclosed foot wear that can protect against injuries and spills.
- Ties and lanyards should not be worn during direct care activity. Instead consider open collar, polo shirt or bow tie.
- Change into a clean uniform or work clothing each day.
- Do not over load machine as this may reduce machine efficiency. Overloading should be avoided to ensure that correct dilution is achieved during the washing process.
- Wash uniforms separately from other clothes to avoid over loading which may reduce machine efficiency.
References


