Summary report on the

Regional workshop on infection prevention and control

Beirut, Lebanon
27–30 July 2009
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World Health Organization
Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
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1. Introduction

A regional workshop on infection prevention and control was held in Beirut, Lebanon on 27–30 July 2009. The workshop was organized by the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. Its purpose was to build capacity of frontline workers, especially nurses and midwives and health/programme managers on infection control of acute respiratory diseases as well as injection safety in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region. The specific objectives of the workshop were for participants to:

- gain understanding on the WHO technical and training materials related to infection control and prevention of acute respiratory diseases and safe injections;
- be exposed to adult training methodologies;
- demonstrate adult training skills through microteaching, using WHO training guides on prevention and control of acute respiratory diseases and injection safety;
- develop action plans on infection prevention and control of acute respiratory diseases and injection safety.

The workshop was a collaborative effort between WHO headquarters and the Regional Office. Twenty three (23) participants attended; 20 nurses and midwives and 3 physicians. The participants were drawn from different levels of the health system, and thus included managers at national and programme levels as well as frontline workers from Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and UNRWA fields (Gaza, West Bank, Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon). The workshop was the first in the series of similar workshops to be held in the Region.

During the opening ceremony, Dr Daher Aden Acting WHO Representative, Lebanon, delivered a message from Dr Hussein A. Gezairy, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. Dr Amal
Mansour, National Nursing Focal Point, represented the Ministry of Health of Lebanon, and Dr Nabil Kronfol represented the members of the WHO Global Advisory Group on Nursing and Midwifery Development. In their messages, it was acknowledged that the workshop on infection control of acute respiratory diseases was timely in light of the current problem of H1N1 and WHO’s move towards the renewal of primary health care. Specific reference was made to the two recent resolutions of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean. Resolution EM/RC/55/R.5 Nursing and midwifery development (2008) requested WHO to develop a comprehensive regional strategy for nursing and midwifery in consultation with Member States and support their efforts to scale up nursing and midwifery capacity. Resolution EM/RCSS1/R.1 Pandemic H1N1 (2009) urged Member States to adopt and implement the recommended public health measures and ensure the application of infection control measures are in harmony with existing strategies in health care systems.

The renewal of primary health care by WHO was an excellent avenue for comprehensive strategies in all the four reform areas: universal coverage, service delivery, leadership and public health policy and taking into account community involvement and participation.

**Summary of discussions**

The workshop encouraged participants to share their experiences on infection control. It was apparent that most countries had protocols and committees directed at infection control. However, the level of implementation and enforcement differed, requiring technical and other support, especially on capacity building, development of action plans and research. As part of information and experience sharing, participants visited the Rafick Hariri government hospital to observe the infection control practices. Strengths and weaknesses were noted and used as learning points for all participants.
At the core of the workshop was enhancement of training knowledge and skills on the infection control utilizing the WHO training package on infection control measures for health care of patients with acute respiratory diseases in community settings (trainer's and learner's guides). In addition, documents and content on safe injections, waste management and the draft content of a training package for community health workers on reducing excess mortality during influenza pandemic were introduced and discussed. Participants were able to conduct micro-teaching on selected modules on infection control of acute respiratory diseases based on the above indicated guides. Furthermore, they were able to generate and propose content for the strengthening of content on reducing excess mortality during influenza pandemic and messages on safe injections targeted at communities.

The workshop concluded with draft action plans on infection control including acute respiratory diseases and injection safety developed by participants represented in this workshop. Several areas of need for support by WHO and key partners were identified as outlined in the points for action below.

**Points for action**

1. WHO headquarters to support the Regional Office in translation of documents on infections prevention and control of acute respiratory diseases, injection safety and waste management into Arabic language.

2. Work on infection control must embrace all other aspects of infection control, not only interventions related to prevention and control of acute respiratory diseases.

3. WHO to develop a training module on injection safety for health workers and messages for the community.
4. WHO headquarters and Regional Office to follow up and support the implementation of action plans on infection control, including the provision of technical support on preparing funding proposals directed at specific funding agencies such as GAVI and the Global Fund.

5. The Regional Office to develop a regional framework for action on infection control to better support nursing and midwifery in the countries of the Region.

6. WHO to request the WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Development, Jordan (JUST) and the Ministry of Health, Jordan, to develop a training package on safe injection, targeting health workers in both Arabic and English.

7. WHO and its partners to support community research in order to develop and implement messages on the promotion of safe injections.