

# Measures for the Prevention of Healthcare-Associated Infections

## 1. Basic Policy on the Prevention of Healthcare-Associated Infections

Healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) are infections acquired by patients in a healthcare facility that are unrelated to the condition for which they were originally receiving care, as well as infections acquired by healthcare personnel within the facility. Preventing HAIs and responding promptly when they occur are important responsibilities of healthcare institutions.

HAIs can be transmitted directly from person to person or indirectly through medical devices and other equipment. Patients with weakened immune systems, older adults, and others who are particularly susceptible to infection may develop HAIs not only from common pathogens but also from microorganisms with low virulence. Therefore, infection prevention and control measures must be implemented across the entire healthcare facility rather than independently by individual healthcare workers.

## 2. Basic Organizational Framework for Infection Prevention and Control

The following committee and teams have been established to promote infection prevention and control.

### 1) Infection Control Committee (ICC)

The ICC is composed of representatives from the medical, nursing, pharmacy, clinical support, and administrative departments. Its purpose is to establish a culture of infection prevention at Kano General Hospital, prevent and control HAIs, and ensure the proper disposal of infectious waste. The committee reviews technical matters related to infection prevention and control, establishes hospital-wide policies, issues instructions, and provides education to all staff.

### 2) Infection Control Team (ICT)

The ICT serves as the operational body responsible for infection prevention and control activities throughout the hospital. Its members are appointed by the Chair of the Infection Control Committee.

The team monitors the routine occurrence of HAIs; provides recommendations and guidance on preventive measures; supports the early detection and containment of outbreaks; reviews antimicrobial susceptibility patterns; and uses the findings to promote the appropriate use of antimicrobial agents. The ICT meets once a month and conducts hospital rounds once a week. The results of these activities are reported to the committee.

### 3) Antimicrobial Stewardship Team (AST)

The AST has been established to continuously assess the appropriateness of antimicrobial selection, route of administration, dosage, and use of diagnostic tests for patients receiving prolonged treatment with specified antimicrobial agents, including broad-spectrum agents.

For each patient, the team assesses whether appropriate microbiological, blood, and imaging studies are being performed; whether the initial antimicrobial agent, route, and dose are appropriate; whether therapeutic drug monitoring is conducted when indicated; and whether microbiological test results and other findings are appropriately reflected in the treatment plan. The team then provides feedback to the attending physician.

### 4) Infection Prevention and Control Link Team

This team serves as a liaison between the ICT and frontline clinical areas and plays a key role in information exchange. It supports the ICT in preventing, identifying, and containing outbreaks. It also reports cases suspected of being HAIs and assists with surveillance as needed.

### **3. Basic Policy on Staff Training**

Training sessions on infection prevention and control are held at least twice a year for all staff to ensure thorough understanding of the principles and specific practices required for HAI prevention. Newly hired staff also receive introductory infection prevention training.

### **4. Basic Policy on Reporting the Occurrence of Infectious Diseases**

Pathogen testing results are reviewed to monitor detection trends and are reported to the Infection Control Committee at its monthly meeting. The committee disseminates infection prevention measures and provides guidance as necessary.

Infection surveillance reports are distributed to all departments through the hospital's internal email system and other channels to raise awareness.

### **5. Basic Policy for Responding to Healthcare-Associated Infections**

If a microorganism capable of causing an HAI is detected, if an associated infection occurs, or if an HAI is suspected, the attending physician, head nurse, or department manager must report the case to the Infection Prevention and Control Office. The office then reports the matter to the Chair of the Infection Control Committee. Under the Chair's direction, the ICT intervenes and works with relevant staff to implement an initial response and prevent further spread.

If an infectious disease subject to mandatory notification under the Act on the Prevention of Infectious Diseases and Medical Care for Patients with Infectious Diseases is identified, the hospital promptly reports it to the public health center and coordinates emergency measures as necessary.

### **6. Basic Policy on Access to These Guidelines by Patients and Others**

These measures are published on the hospital website and posted within the hospital so that patients and other members of the public can review them.

When an infectious disease occurs, the hospital provides patients and their families with sufficient information and seeks their cooperation with the measures required to prevent the spread of infection and ensure appropriate treatment.

### **7. Other Basic Policies Required to Promote Infection Prevention and Control**

The hospital maintains an Infection Prevention and Control Manual that describes the specific measures required of hospital staff. The manual is distributed to all departments and can also be accessed through the electronic medical record system.

The hospital also proactively introduces supplies, pharmaceuticals, and other resources required for infection prevention and control.