

ABSTRACT

The practice of infection control is important in every health care institution since it ensures safety of the patient, health care providers and visitors to the facility and community at large. Instruments and equipment that are re-used from one patient to another should be thoroughly disinfected to minimize, if not eliminate, the possibility of transmitting infections. It is sad that health care providers who are entrusted by an unsuspecting patient should spread infections including such blood-borne diseases as HIV, hepatitis and haemorrhagic fevers.

The objective of this study was to establish how effective are the solutions used for disinfecting instruments in health facilities. A 'disinfectant-in-use' test was applied to samples collected from five public institutions. In addition the hospital acquired sepsis was analysed from the same institutions to establish a correlation. Forty per cent failed the test by supporting growth of micro-organisms. The duration of disinfectant in use significantly contributed to the failure rate: the higher the duration above that recommended the higher the growth of micro-organism in the sample. Failure to clean the disinfectant container also contributed to failure rate. The facilities that had high disinfectant failure rate also had high prevalence of sepsis. It is recommended that adherence to manufacturer instructions and professional ethics is paramount. Close supervision and regular surveillance on use of disinfectants should be done in all institutions to minimize likelihood of contamination.