

An appeal to health care professionals- do not wear the same sterile scrubs in hospital and on streets

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Introduction

During and post the covid-19 era, most of the health care professionals including doctors, are still having a tendency to wear sterile scrubs both in clinics and out of clinics. They have the tendency to have “no time to spare” for following the protocol of sterilization. The primary essence of this article is about the dangerous hazards of health care professionals (including doctors) wearing same “sterile scrubs” from Home to Hospitals and vice versa.

Context

Scrubs are the tell-tale uniform of the healthcare community.¹ The term “scrubbing” as a verb refers to thoroughly washing your hands and arms and donning a surgical gown using aseptic technique.² Also, the terms are “scrub in” and “scrub out,” not “scrub up” and “scrub down”. A few health care professionals feel that, it is very annoying to walk all the way to your locker, take off your scrubs, put on your street clothes, lock up, head out to lunch, come back, go back to your locker, put on new scrubs, lock away your street clothes... than it is to just step out of the hospital and eat.³ This is very much related to the comfort zone arrived by them.

Some healthcare groups go to the extent of asserting that wearing scrubs outside a medical facility is not a threat to community health, and that there is no risk of scrubs transmitting the novel coronavirus to the public. Needless to say, it would be hard and even unethical to try and prove wearing sterile scrubs in public cannot spread disease or microbes.⁴

Decades ago, in many hospitals across the U.S.A, the original policy regarding the wearing of scrubs was that, the clothing was not allowed uncovered outside the hospital grounds, and should be cleaned by the hospital laundry departments. Apparently, this was done to prevent possible pathogen (including microbes) transfer to and from the hospital.

In the U.K. to this day it's still a disciplinary offense, in most of the National Health Service (NHS) hospitals to wear scrubs to and from work. The official reason which was given for this practice is “hygiene and professionalism”.⁵

Evidence with respect to Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) and other microbes suggests that the pathogen, which is highly resistant to antibiotics, is able to survive for long periods of time on any clothing. It has also been demonstrated that the healthcare professionals who enter a room occupied by a MRSA-infected patient may acquire MRSA on their clothing, without actually coming into direct contact with the infected patient.

There isn't any conclusive evidence, still so much is still unknown about the novel coronavirus even though we live in a vaccinated community (yet herd immunity is possibly impossible).⁶ Therefore, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, the question becomes why

risk at all potentially spreading dangerous pathogens such as novel coronavirus by wearing the same sterile scrubs in public to and from the hospital and clinics.

Also, the health care professionals including doctors should know that wearing scrubs in public could cause people to feel uneasy. It also sends the wrong message to the public about how least careful the health care workers are being to protect the public. At times, perception like this is reality.

Conclusion

A kind appeal for all the health care professionals all over the world is that “kindly follow safe and sterile” procedures, in home and at the hospitals by taking some time to change their street clothing to scrubs for the better safety of self and people including patients around them.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

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