

Prevention of surgical site infections

Publication

Prevention of surgical site infections.

Recommendation of the Commission for Hospital Hygiene and Infection Prevention (KRINKO) at the German Robert Koch Institute (RKI).

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At a glance

- **Surgical Site Infections (SSI) are among the most common hospital-acquired infections. With a share of approximately 22 per cent, SSI are the second most common nosocomial infections in Germany.**
- **Various pre-, intra- and postoperative measures can help to drastically reduce the risk of infection for patients.**
- **The latest KRINKO recommendation for the prevention of postoperative wound infections dates from April 2018.**

Background

Every medical procedure is accompanied by a risk of infection. With a share of approximately 22 per cent, SSI are the second most common nosocomial infections in Germany¹, also because the number of surgical procedures continues to rise. In low- and middle-income countries, SSI is the most common form of nosocomial infection, according to the WHO. The question of whether “inpatient” or “outpatient” surgery is performed plays no role in the assessment of the SSI risk.

Significance for work in the outpatient sector

Proper infection prevention can drastically reduce the risk of infection for patients. Clearly formulated and practical guidelines are the basis for proven and effective infection prevention measures. That is why the health authorities have long relied on such guidelines. Experts agree that it will not be possible to reduce the infection rate to zero. However, up to 40 per cent of all nosocomial infections could be prevented through proper hand hygiene alone². Participation in a national surveillance system (NNIS) and feedback from one’s own SSI data to national reference data can also reduce the infection rate by 25 to 65 per cent.

1 http://www.nrz-hygiene.de/fileadmin/nrz/download/pps2016/PPS_2016_Abschlussbericht_20.07.2017.pdf

2 <https://www.aerzteblatt.de/archiv/66142/Haendehygiene-zur-Praevention-nosokomialer-Infektionen>

Method

The goal of the Commission for Hospital Hygiene and Infection Prevention (KRINKO) at the German Robert Koch Institute (RKI), whose latest recommendation on “Prevention of postoperative wound infections” dates from April 2018, is to integrate the latest state of research into their guidelines. KRINKO’s hygiene experts are continually developing the guidelines further, under consideration of current infection epidemiological evaluations. The guidelines are drawn up in accordance with the Infection Protection Act (IfSG) § 23 and published by the German Robert Koch Institute (RKI) in Germany’s Federal Health Gazette.

Results

The recommendations for action are categorised into pre-, intra- and postoperative measures. These include:

- In the operating theatre, perform a thorough antiseptics of the skin of the surgical area with an alcohol-based skin antiseptic.
- Wear sterile surgical gowns and sterile gloves. Wear two pairs of gloves during types.
- Use only appropriately prepared medical devices.

The complete list can be found at the homepage of RKI³.

3 https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Krankenhaushygiene/Kommission/Ergaenzende_Informationen/Muster-KRINKO-SSI-Rili_2018.pdf?__blob=publicationFile