

USING DISPOSABLE BLOOD PRESSURE CUFFS MAY REDUCE THE SPREAD OF INFECTION AND THE ASSOCIATED COMPLICATIONS.

In busy patient-care areas, blood pressure cuffs may not be sanitized properly or replaced as often as they should. “Previous investigations have identified blood pressure cuffs as a potential source of nosocomial infection or vehicle for transmission of contagion in selected patient populations.”¹

More than 270 institutes report nosocomial infections to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Nosocomial infections occur in 7-10% of hospitalized patients and 80,000 deaths occur each year because of this.² The most common infections are vancomycin resistant enterococci (VRE) and *Clostridium difficile* (*C. difficile*).²

Examples of pathogens found on blood pressure cuffs:

- a. Norwegian scabies³
- b. Vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE)⁷
- c. Blood⁴
- d. *Clostridium difficile*^{2,5}

“Presumed clean” blood pressure cuffs may be the most alarming. In one hospital setting, 100% of blood pressure cuffs cultured from the OR, PACU, BSICU and ER contained bacterial colonization.⁶

Patient-care areas that may be the highest risk are: burn units, transplant areas, immuno-suppressed patient areas, surgical suites, obstetrics, pediatrics, nurseries, ICU, PICU, MICU, emergency departments, and areas where joint replacement is conducted.

References:

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