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**Title: A survey on staff's knowledge, attitude and compliance on hand hygiene in a special-need school in Hong Kong**

### **ABSTRACT**

Evidence shows that hand-hygiene is the most important and the most basic technique to prevent the spread of infection or communicable diseases. However, past studies abroad showed that compliance rate was persistently low with hand-hygiene either in school populations or in the community. As a matter of fact, many studies have been performed to investigate the factors influencing hand-washing practices in hospital settings. These studies have evaluated the frequency of hand washing and the impact of various interventions on hand hygiene concerning health care providers. Contrarily, hardly any research on hand-hygiene compliance of staff working in special-need schools has been published. These school personnel are actually in frequent and close contact with children who are mentally and physically weak and dependent.

The purpose of this study was to review the staff's knowledge, attitude and compliance towards hand-hygiene in a special-need school. It attempted to identify the relationships among knowledge, attitude, compliance, rank, age, sex, academic level, working experience, training, and seminars about hand-hygiene. It aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding about staff's knowledge, attitude and compliance on hand-hygiene so as to facilitate future policy planning by school administrators. It might also arouse staff's awareness of the importance of hand-hygiene and enhanced the efficacy of prevention strategies against the wide spread of communicable diseases in the school.

This was a descriptive survey. A self-administered structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Questionnaires were distributed to all staff that was in consistent contact with the children at the school. Descriptive statistics were used to organize and summarize the collected data.

The findings indicated that staff's knowledge on hand-hygiene for preventing infection was good and their attitude towards hand-hygiene was positive and viewed prevention of infection as the most motivating factor for hand washing. On self-reported hand-hygiene practice, staff reported that they washed their hands frequently, especially for those activities more likely to result in contamination of hands. There were no significant differences found among staff's level of knowledge of hand-hygiene related to rank, age, sex, education level, working

experience in the school, or attendance of hand-hygiene talks in the past 6 months. However, there were significant differences found between hand-hygiene attitude and rank. Health professionals remained to have the most positive attitude towards hand-hygiene. Besides, those who were below age 35 had slightly higher the positive attitude than those above. Moreover, there was a mark correlation between knowledge of hand-hygiene and practice on hand-hygiene among staff. The results of this study suggested that multifaceted approaches that include refreshment talks, continue monitoring and feedback to staff on hand-hygiene should be implemented to achieve optimal compliance with hand-hygiene.