Clean Hospitals Day 2023 marks the global launch of a self-assessment tool

Alexandra Peters¹,²*, Pierre Parneix³,⁴ and Didier Pittet¹

Keywords Infection prevention and control, Infection control, Environmental hygiene, Self-assessment, Healthcare-associated infection, Multimodal strategy, Environmental cleaning

Healthcare environmental hygiene is increasingly recognized as critical in infection prevention and control (IPC). Much like its predecessor World Hand Hygiene Day, the objective of the Clean Hospitals Day, celebrated each year on October 20, is to raise awareness and foster engagement among healthcare facilities around the world. The newly published tool, the Healthcare Environmental Hygiene Self-Assessment Framework (HEHSAF), has been developed and internationally validated to help healthcare facilities to identify areas for improvement in their environmental hygiene programs, as well as benchmark this improvement over time. Healthcare facilities can download the full promotional toolkit and posters (Fig. 1) for Clean Hospitals Day 2023 from: www.CleanHospitals.com.

The launch of the HEHSAF tool in at least six languages (Chinese, Croatian, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish) marks the first time that a global snapshot of healthcare environmental hygiene programs is being attempted. The tool is geared towards IPC experts and environmental hygiene managers to help them identify areas for improvement in their facilities. It has been in development since 2018, and consists of a 96-question secure, online tool based on a multimodal improvement strategy. A pilot study using an earlier version of the tool was conducted by Clean Hospitals in 51 healthcare facilities in 35 countries [1]. It was then further developed with the help of an international expert group and validated internationally in seven additional countries.

The HEHSAF is published on the online platform REDCap, a secure web application for building and managing online surveys and databases. It is specifically geared to support online and offline data capture for research studies and operations. Available exclusively to institutions, REDCap is used by the most prestigious universities around the world. Currently over 6600 institutions in over 150 countries trust the security of the platform [2]. Although healthcare facilities who complete the HEHSAF will have access to their own detailed data, only anonymized and aggregated data will be shared. This is of utmost importance to ensure that healthcare facilities are comfortable being transparent when filling out the tool.

With global implementation, the HEHSAF will give institutions a roadmap for improving their environmental hygiene, support environmental services staff, increase the visibility of healthcare environmental hygiene on a global level, and save lives by reducing healthcare-associated infections. The HEHSAF and a full Clean Hospitals Day toolkit can be found on the Clean Hospitals website (www.CleanHospitals.com). The tool is also available at the following link: https://redcap.link/HEHSAF.

Let’s improve healthcare environmental hygiene together and save lives.
Acknowledgements
This work is supported by the Infection Control Programme (SPCI), University of Geneva Faculty of Medicine, Geneva, Switzerland. Alexandra Peters is the scientific lead, and Pierre Parneix and Didier Pittet are, respectively, the vice-chair and the chair the Clean Hospitals Association. The aim of Clean Hospitals is to harness industry strengths to align and improve implementation of best practices recommendations for environmental hygiene in health care in different parts of the world, including in least developed countries. In this instance, academic partners/companies/industry with a focus on environmental hygiene and infection control related advancement have the specific aim of improving access to affordable products and techniques as well as through education and research. All listed authors declare no financial support, grants, financial interests or consultancy that could lead to conflicts of interest. The authors alone are responsible for the views expressed in this article and they do not necessarily represent the views, decisions or policies of the institutions with which they are affiliated.

Declarations
Competing interests
None declared.

Published online: 08 October 2023

References

Publisher’s Note
Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.