

## Personal Portable Alcohol Gel Dispensers: A Novel Approach for Improving Hand Hygiene Practices

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**Background:** Hands of healthcare workers (HCW) are major vectors for transmission and spread of nosocomial infections. Proper hand hygiene is a fundamental element of infection control strategies in healthcare facilities. Ideally, hands should be decontaminated before and after contact with patients. Despite frequent and ongoing educational efforts, adherence to recommended hand cleansing practices among HCW remains poor (usually less than 50%). Adherence is associated with easy access to hand-rub solution, whereas high workload is associated with non-adherence. Compliance is particularly problematic in emergency departments and critical care units. To improve hand hygiene practices among HCW we introduced clip fastened personal portable alcohol hand rub dispensers (gelFast; Medonyx Inc., Toronto, Ontario) to these settings.

**Methods:** Dispensers were distributed to HCW at a surgical intensive care unit, neonatal intensive care unit and the emergency department of a large urban hospital. Thirty-five physicians, nurses and respiratory therapists were queried with a questionnaire about their experiences following use of the devices.

**Results:** All queried HCW responded to the questionnaires. Thirty one (89%) HCW found the product easy to use. Twenty five (71%) thought that use of the device made hand sanitizing easier, and 23 (66%) felt that they were likely to sanitize their hands more often when wearing this product. Overall, 74% of respondents said that they would use the product if it were distributed in their unit.

**Conclusions:** Personal portable alcohol gel dispensers are well accepted by HCW in a variety of patient care units and are expected to improve compliance with hand hygiene guidelines.