In the context of the H1N1 influenza pandemic, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) reports recommended that NIOSH focus on worker safety and the appropriate use of PPE. NIOSH’s Health Care Worker PPE Action Plan called for an evaluation of respirator use for influenza among healthcare workers in acute care facilities.

**Aims**

- Describe the extent to which hospitals have implemented required elements of a respiratory protection program (RPP) for seasonal influenza.
- Determine the usage of respiratory protection for seasonal influenza exposure among health care workers.

**Methods**

- **In-person surveys** of 215 hospital managers (HMs), 245 unit managers (UMs), and 1105 health care workers (HCWs) in 98 acute care hospitals during 2011-2012.
- **In-person observations** of respirator use demonstrations by 356 HCWs.
- **5 regions**: North Carolina, Minnesota/Illinois, New York, Michigan, and California.
- Calculated hospital-level adherence values.

**Background**

- NIOSH’s Health Care Worker PPE Action Plan called for an evaluation of respirator use for influenza among healthcare workers in acute care facilities.

**Findings**

- Most REACH II hospitals adhere to requirements/recommendations concerning:
  - Respiratory protection when in close contact or performing aerosol-generating procedures on a patient with a disease requiring droplet precautions.
  - Respiratory protection when in close contact with a patient with seasonal influenza.
  - Medical evaluation and fit testing before employees wear a respirator, and training employees about respiratory protection.
- The lowest levels of adherence to requirements/recommendation among REACH II hospitals concern:
  - Respiratory protection when performing aerosol-generating procedures on a patient with seasonal influenza.
  - The frequency employees should be medically evaluated.
  - Instructing staff about which respirator they have been fit tested for.
- RPP program evaluations, formal documentation of respirator use and supply.
  - Observations of employee respirator use.
- Significant regional differences existed for many of the topics investigated. There were no consistent trends based on the other explanatory factors (hospital size, education, job title, union membership, or employment status).

**Conclusions**

- The awareness of all hospital staff should be raised about respiratory protection in the presence of patients with seasonal influenza; monitoring and evaluating the hospital’s RPP; and medical evaluation and fit testing requirements.
- The awareness of HCWs should also be raised about respiratory protection in the presence of patients with infectious disease requiring airborne precautions; training requirements; and correct respirator use.

**Acknowledgements**


**References**


**Next Steps**

- Disseminate findings.
- Develop targeted information campaigns to raise awareness.

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**Disclaimer:** The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.