

alcohol-based hand hygiene could facilitate scabies dissemination in many facilities in developing countries where scabies is endemic, and infected patients may be unrecognized by doctors, especially if scabies is not the reason for medical consultation.

We experienced an outbreak of scabies among healthcare workers at our institution, a tertiary acute-care hospital in Brazil, 1 month after 70% ethanol hand rub became available (data not published). At that time, 28 healthcare workers, mostly nurses, became infected, and they were all effectively treated with oral ivermectin. The source patient received a diagnosis of scabies only after the outbreak took place, which explains why he had not been placed under contact precautions.

Use of alcohol-based hand rub has many advantages, compared with hand-washing, and should be implemented in developing countries, as recently concluded by Allegranzi and Pittet.² However, when a scabies diagnosis is made or suspected, healthcare workers should use traditional hand hygiene techniques instead of alcohol-based hand rub, in order to prevent transmission of scabies among staff or patients.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Potential conflicts of interest. All authors report no conflicts of interest relevant to this letter.

**Fernando Bellissimo-Rodrigues, MD;
Magda Fabbri Isaac Silva, RN, PhD;
Regina Puti de Souza, RN;
Paulo de Tarso de Oliveira e Castro, MD**

From the Committee for Hospital Infection Control (F.B.-R., M.F.I.S.), and the Occupational Safety and Health Service (R.P. de S.), Hospital das Clínicas da Faculdade de Medicina de Ribeirão Preto, Universidade de São Paulo, and the Committee for Hospital Infection Control, Hospital do Câncer de Barretos (P. de T. de O. e C.), São Paulo, Brazil.

Address reprint requests to Fernando Bellissimo-Rodrigues, MD, Avenida dos Bandeirantes 3900, Campus Universitário - Monte Alegre, CEP: 14048-14900, Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo, Brazil (fbellissimo@ig.com.br).

Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol 2008; 29:782–783

© 2008 by The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America. All rights reserved. 0899-823X/2008/2908-0020\$15.00. DOI: 10.1086/588682

REFERENCES

1. Garcia C, Iglesias D, Terashima A, Canales M, Gotuzzi E. Use of ivermectin to treat an institutional outbreak of scabies in a low-resource setting. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol* 2007;28:1337–1338.
2. Allegranzi B, Pittet D. Healthcare-associated infection in developing countries: simple solutions to meet complex challenges. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol* 2007;28:1323–1327.

Reply to Bellissimo-Rodrigues et al.

To the Editor—Regarding our recent article on use of ivermectin,¹ Bellissimo-Rodrigues et al.² ask about hand hygiene policy during the outbreak period. The use of alcohol-based hand rub formulations has only been implemented in the newborn intensive care unit in this hospital. The outbreak took place in the medical intensive care unit, where no alcohol-based hand rubs were used.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Potential conflicts of interest. The author reports no conflicts of interest relevant to this reply.

Coralith Garcia, MD

From the Instituto de Medicina Tropical Alexander von Humboldt, Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, Lima, Peru.

Address reprint requests to Coralith Garcia, MD, Instituto de Medicina Tropical Alexander von Humboldt, Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, Av. Honorio Delgado 430, Urb. Ingenieria, Lima 41, Peru (03345@upch.edu.pe).

Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol 2008; 29:783

© 2008 by The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America. All rights reserved. 0899-823X/2008/2908-0021\$15.00. DOI: 10.1086/589977

REFERENCES

1. Garcia C, Iglesias D, Terashima A, Canales M, Gotuzzi E. Use of ivermectin to treat an institutional outbreak of scabies in a low-resource setting. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol* 2007;28:1337–1338.
2. Bellissimo-Rodrigues F, Silva MFI, Souza RP, Castro PTO. Alcohol-based hand rub and nosocomial scabies. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol* 2008;29:782–783.