

Healthcare worker knowledge gaps regarding disinfectant wipes in a network of ambulatory clinics

Michelle Swetky, MPH, CIC, FAPIC; Marie H. Wilson, MSN, RN, CIC, FAPIC; Brittany McCreery, MD, MBA, FACHE; Steven A Pergam, MD, MPH; Salma Walji, MPA, RN

Background

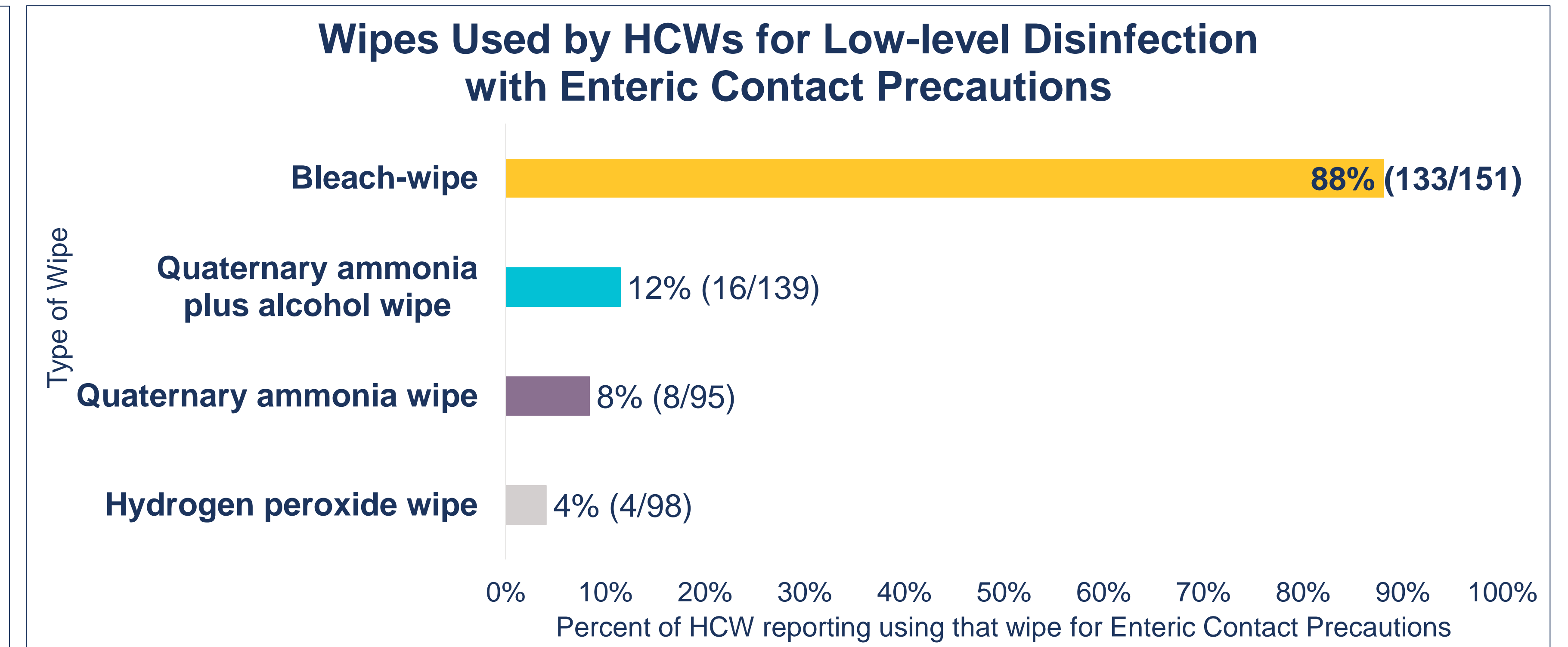
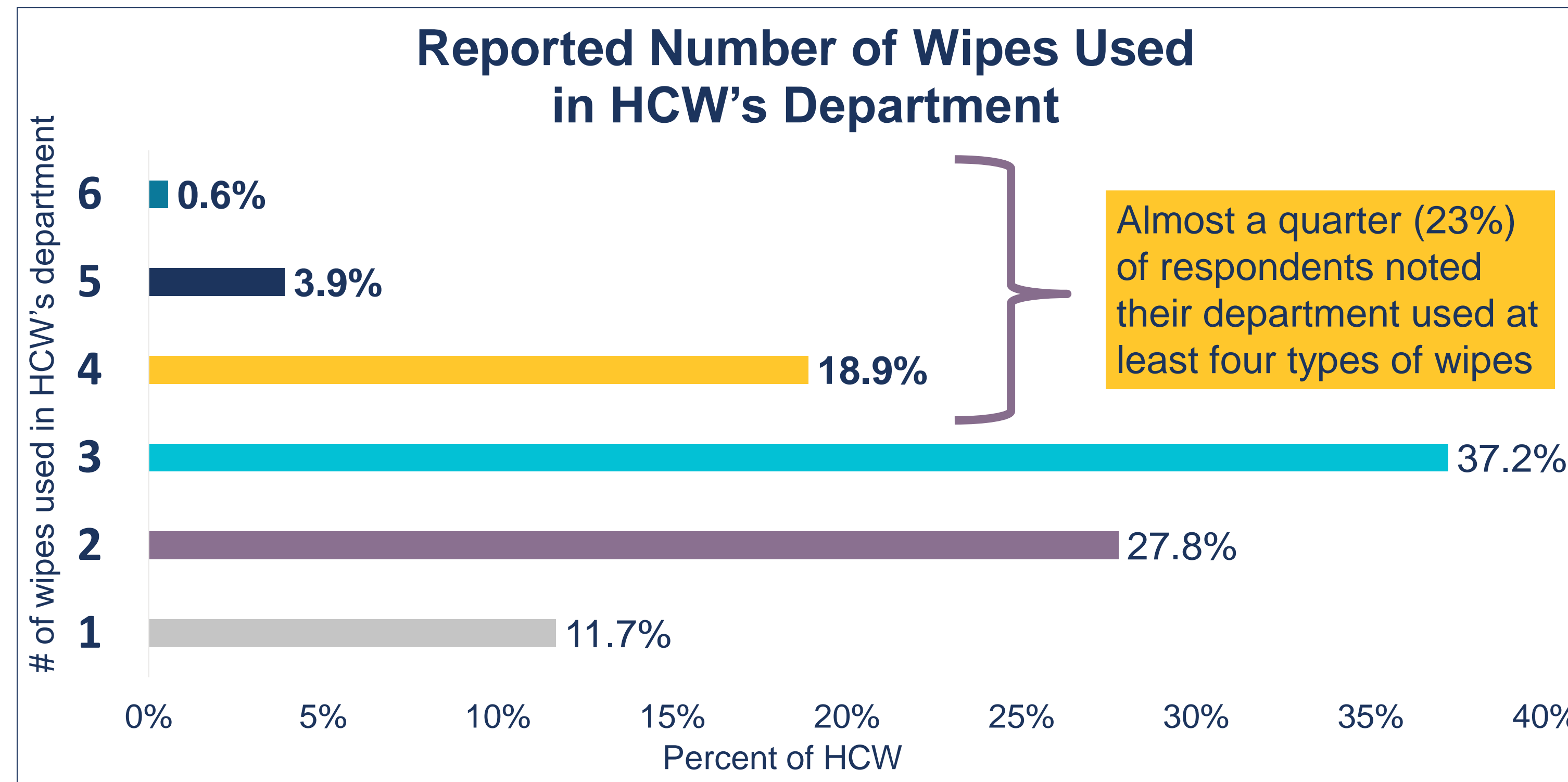
- Low-level disinfection (LLD) of non-critical medical equipment and surfaces is vital in the prevention of healthcare-associated infections.
- Few studies have investigated healthcare workers' (HCWs) knowledge of wipes used for LLD in high turnover ambulatory settings.
- We set out to assess HCWs level of understanding for LLD wipe use, and the spectrum of products used in an ambulatory cancer center network.

Methods

- Respondents were queried through multiple choice and open-ended questions about disinfectant wipes available in their department and details about use (e.g., contact time and indication).
- Data was collected via an anonymous survey sent through routine clinical staff email newsletters, email reminders to clinical managers, or through surveys completed in clinics on a tablet provided by investigators.

Findings

A total of 231 HCWs responded to at least one question on the survey over a two-week period



Percentage of HCWs correctly reporting contact time of the most frequently used wipes	
Bleach-wipe	46% (70/153)
Hydrogen peroxide wipe	49% (48/98)
Quaternary ammonia plus alcohol wipe	47% (64/137)
Quaternary ammonia wipe	50% (48/97)

HCWs correctly reported contact time only 47% of the time

Conclusions

- LLD is a critical safety measure in the ambulatory setting, yet less than half of HCWs were able to identify the correct contact time of frequently used wipes.
- The inappropriate use of non-sporicidal wipes for enteric contact* precautions was noted frequently.
- The large variety of wipes that can accumulate in ambulatory environments may further HCW confusion, leading to inappropriate use of wipes and inadequate LLD.
- Center-based training and product standardization may help address this important safety issue.

*Enteric contact precautions requires use of a sporicidal wipe at the institution.