

# More than a wipes manufacturer

Medipal provides a new learning unit with CPD accreditation focusing on infection prevention and control.

It is fair to say that over time, Medipal has gone from strength to strength. From the head office and manufacturing site in Lutterworth, Leicestershire, Medipal provides wipes to more than 70 countries across the world. A move for the Middle East and Asia Pacific team to larger offices in Dubai, and winning several major wipes contracts in the UK, Ireland, Europe and the Middle East are just some examples that show how Pal International - the parent company of Medipal - has grown to become a leading supplier of single-use, hygiene and infection control products around the world.

The company's mission is to make work places and care environments more hygienic and safer places to be. Medipal says that comes from not only being a science-led, UK manufacturer providing high quality single use hygiene and infection control products, but by providing healthcare sectors across

the world with the education and support they require to ensure everyone has access to infection prevention education. The company believes it is the responsibility of everyone within any setting where healthcare is delivered.

As a year of 70th birthday celebrations for the National Health Service continue across the country, there have been many reviews of the changes that have taken place since it began in 1948.

Nursing practice during the early period placed enormous emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene. It is argued that this was linked to sanitarianism which influenced nursing practice before its replacement by germ theory in the late 19th and early 20th century. Probationer nurses learnt their skills in managing infection risks to themselves and their patients in a disciplined and safe way. This was achieved through the exercise



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of strict routines and a hierarchy of tasks that provided a graduated exposure to the patient and infection risks.<sup>1</sup>

Infection prevention and control is something that has remained at the forefront of the NHS. Today the infections may be different, while some have evolved, others have travelled and developed due to the globalised world we now live in. Across Europe more than 4.1 million people are affected by HCAs every year, resulting in 37,000 deaths and direct costs of approximately €7 billion.<sup>2,3</sup>

In England alone, approximately 300,000 people per year are affected by a healthcare-associated infection (HCAI) which can be preventable. These infections are estimated to cost the NHS over £1 bn a year.<sup>4</sup>

Healthcare-associated infections (HCAs) are defined as infections acquired in hospital or healthcare service units that first appear 48 hours or more after admission, or within 30 days after discharge following inpatient care.<sup>5</sup>

The role that healthcare professionals have in the prevention of HCAs is paramount to the development of future medicine. There can be huge developments in the treatments and the science behind the pioneering medical procedures, but if HCAs put the patients' recovery process at risk, then the boundaries of medicine are limited.

## The need for accessible training

Currently there is no compulsory training within infection prevention for cleaning staff in hospitals. With time and budgets becoming ever tighter, there are few

opportunities for nurses and hospital housekeepers to work shadow and even fewer opportunities for them to go on courses. In order to ensure patient safety, Medipal recognised the need for accessible training available to all levels of hospital staff, not just here in the UK but across the world. The importance of education is something that cannot be underestimated.

Medipal is providing *Infection Prevention and Control: Key Principles* written by Neil Wigglesworth, deputy director of infection prevention and control at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, and president of the Infection Prevention Society. The unit focuses on the fundamentals of IPC practice and all settings where patient care is delivered. The learning unit is based on UK and international guidance on IPC best practice and key evidence on this crucial subject.

The aim of the course is to increase the knowledge and understanding of infection prevention and control within healthcare settings. The unit provides the evidence to back up the learning, which in turn increases the understanding. Users start with a baseline assessment to understand their current knowledge. This is then followed by an evidence-based review which contains live links to key evidence and national guidance on IPC. The unit covers major types of HCAs, modes of transmission, antimicrobial resistance, standard IPC precautions and cleaning and decontamination - all key areas of infection control that are important worldwide.

In order to help take the learning and apply it to a work situation, four case scenarios have been put together which ask multiple choice questions. These questions will provide feedback along the way and link the user back to the areas where they will find the correct answer and the evidence to support it.

The unit is completed by a final test which repeats the baseline study questions in order to measure the success of the learning unit. Users gaining over 80% can then download a personalised certificate which shows two hours' CPD. The unit can also be used as the basis for one of the five reflective accounts required for revalidation.

The unit is not just there as a test to complete. The intention has been to create a valuable online resource which can be returned to. The unit contains a series of illustrated factsheets on the practical aspects of IPC and these can be downloaded or printed out for reference or use as teaching material.

### Accessible education

In 1948, education was classroom based. Medipal has recognised that in 2018, there is not the time, space, budget or requirement for all nursing education to be classroom based. Education needs to be accessible, flexible and engaging.

The new educational unit is accessible online on computers, tablets and



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smartphones. It does not have to be completed in one sitting, and it will automatically save users' progress to start again where they left off. The interactive design of the unit, with click throughs to extra information, and images to illustrate explanations in the text, makes the unit clear and understandable.

It has been designed to accommodate users with knowledge at both ends of the spectrum. Infection prevention and control is not just the responsibility of an infection control team. Developed for anyone who works within healthcare, Medipal is encouraging users to complete this unit to maintain a thorough grounding in infection prevention and control.

To access the educational unit, go to [www.palinternational.com/news](http://www.palinternational.com/news)

### References

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**Medipal®**  
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Pal International Ltd.  
Bilton Way,  
Lutterworth  
Leicestershire  
LE17 4JA  
United Kingdom

uksales@palinternational.com  
<https://www.palinternational.com/>  
Tel: +44 (0) 1455 555 700