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How Standard Are Standard Precautions? Knowledge and Attitudes Toward Standard Precautions at an Academic Medical Center

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Background: Standard precautions are the basis of infection prevention and include a set of common-sense infection control practices that prevent transmission of diseases acquired by contact with blood, body fluids, nonintact skin, and mucous membranes. These measures include hand hygiene, personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning and disinfecting, linen handling, waste disposal, sharps safety and respiratory etiquette. Standard precautions require that the risk for exposure be assessed and appropriate precautions taken based on risk. Observations and anecdotal evidence have led us to believe that understanding of standard precautions is lacking among healthcare personnel. **Methods:** A survey was conducted at a large health system to assess knowledge and practices related to specific elements of standard precautions. **Results:** More than 3,000 HCWs responded from inpatient settings (41%), outpatient settings (37%), and both settings (22%). Nurses comprised the majority of respondents (54%), and others included physicians (9%), respiratory therapists, as well as physical and occupational therapists. **Discussion:** The vast majority (96%) of respondents agreed that standard precautions were required in the care of all patients, but a significant proportion (34%) interpreted that to mean that standard precautions always involve wearing gloves, and 22.5% thought that PPE was always required for standard precautions. Hand hygiene and sharps safety were identified as the best understood elements of standard precautions. Respiratory etiquette and cleaning and disinfection were reported as the least understood elements, with PPE, waste disposal, and linen handling also being reported as inadequately understood components of standard precautions (Fig. 1).

Conclusions: In an era of increasing drug resistance and fewer effective antibiotics, standard precautions are our best defense against the spread of infections in the healthcare setting. Our survey showed that there is room for improvement among healthcare workers in understanding of the elements of standard precautions. We plan to use the survey to craft a targeted education campaign to improve understanding of and adherence to standard precautions.

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How to Convince People and Get Adherence to Hand Hygiene Practices? The Success of Ozires, the Humanoid Robot!

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Background: Our team has been fighting nosocomial infections since 1991. During our journey, we often ask why people do not wash their hands! Semmelweis discovered in the 1840s that hand-washing prevented deaths from puerperal sepsis, but we still need to convince healthcare workers about hand hygiene. One answer is that washing hands is an unsophisticated gesture, without any technology, so people just do not do it. How can we improve compliance with hand hygiene? We imagined a robot in our team to remind people to wash their hands. Then, in 2016 we met Meccanoid, a US\$200 toy robot: a 4-foot-tall programmable humanoid robot with voice recognition capabilities. We made adaptations in the robot (mini-projector + audio amplifier + alcohol dispenser + spy camera), and we gave him a name (Ozires) and a

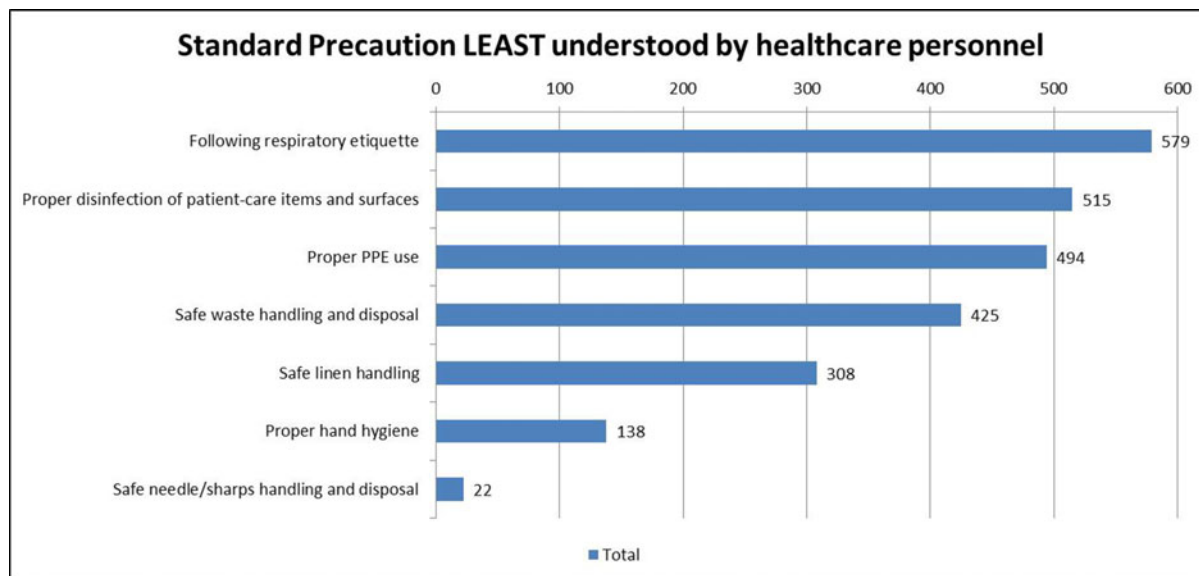


Fig. 1.