

MENTAL HEALTH INTEREST GROUP (MHIG)

The MHIG held their annual meeting at the CHICA conference in St. John's, Newfoundland in May. Discussion involved recommendations for design of mental health wards/hospitals and the decision was that each patient room should have at least one toilet and one sink, with a separate dedicated hand-washing sink available to staff at the room's exit and in the hallways. Minutes are available on the CHICA website.

The MHIG hosted a pre-conference educational half-day titled: *Infection Prevention and Control Issues related to Dementia and Other Mental Health Illnesses*. The four topics presented included:

- An overview of mental health illness
- Routine practices and additional precautions in mental health settings
- Admissions screening – what to do with the results
- Outbreaks on secure wards

The questionnaire on current IPAC practices in mental health services across Canada were sent out to MHIG members, and results were compiled and analyzed with the support of the Research Department at Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences. The findings were then presented by Rebecca Yu, co-chair of the MHIG at the CHICA-Canada conference. Her presentation: "CHICA-Mental Health Interest Group Report: Preliminary Findings on Current IPAC Practices" was then distributed to all members and is now available on the CHICA-MHIG website.

As indicated from the questionnaire findings, there is need to standardize infection prevention and control practices among mental health services. The first of three scheduled teleconferences was held in July 2009. Twenty-one members volunteered to work in a task group drafting a position statement/best practices to provide standardized practices. Once the draft from each areas of topics are reviewed by all task group members, the goal is to forward it to Dr. Jim Hutchinson to review.

The planning process for hosting a Webber Training education session has been completed and the date is May 13, 2010. Teleclass registration is complimentary and has been donated to the members of MHIG by Mr. Paul Webber.

Numerous IPAC-related questions and discussions were held among group members throughout 2009. Alexis Silverman and Rebecca Yu, the current co-chairs of the MHIG continue to correspond with group members via e-mail. This includes summarizing and posting responses to questions in the MHIG area of the CHICA-Canada website under Frequently Asked Questions. Members who don't mind sharing their answers are requested to use "Reply All" button for their email. Those that do not want their names on the web are asked to reply to the sender only.

Alexis Silverman and Rebecca Yu will be stepping down as co-chairs of the MHIG and will be looking to the membership for volunteers to take on this responsibility.

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Co-Chairs, Mental Health Interest Group