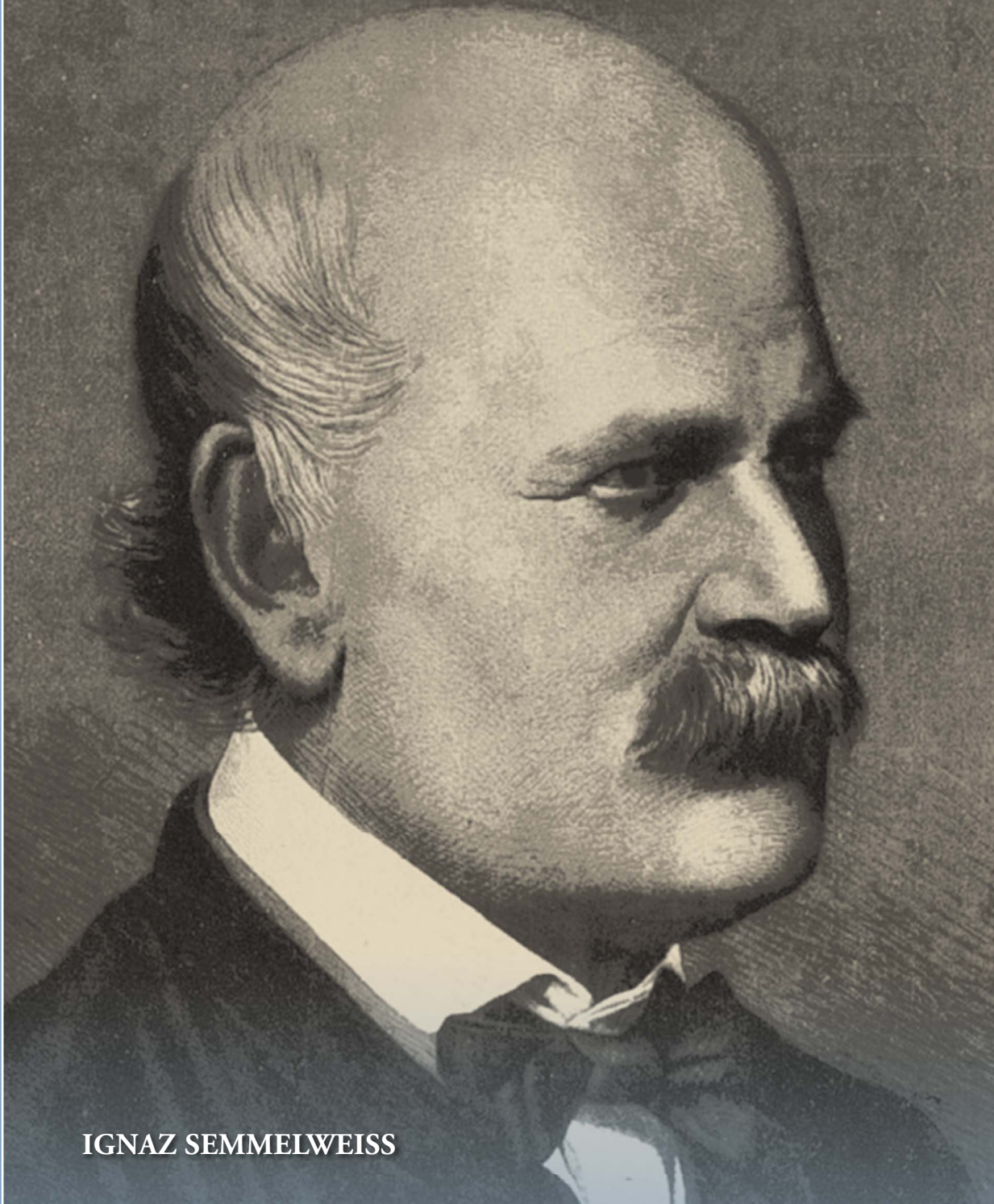


Volume 36, No 7

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## CONTENTS

## SHEA Expert Guidance

- 747** Isolation Precautions for Visitors  
*L. Silvia Munoz-Price, David B. Banach, Gonzalo Bearman, Jane M. Gould, Surbhi Leekha, Daniel J. Morgan, Tara N. Palmore, Mark E. Rupp, David J. Weber, and Timothy L. Wiemken*

## Original Articles

- 759** Healthcare-Associated Pathogens and Nursing Home Policies and Practices: Results From a National Survey  
*Zhiqiu Ye, Dana B. Mukamel, Susan S. Huang, Yue Li, and Helena Temkin-Greener*
- 767** Occupational Determinants of Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* Colonization Among Healthcare Workers: A Longitudinal Study in a Rehabilitation Center  
*J. Legrand, L. Temime, C. Lawrence, J. L. Herrmann, P. Y. Boelle, and D. Guilletot, on behalf of the iBird Study Group*
- 777** Whole-Genome Sequencing for Outbreak Investigations of Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit: Time for Routine Practice?  
*Taj Azarian, Robert L. Cook, Judith A. Johnson, Nilmarie Guzman, Yvette S. McCarter, Noel Gomez, Mobeen H. Rathore, J. Glenn Morris Jr., and Marco Salemi*
- 786** Risk Factors for Recurrent Colonization With Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in Community-Dwelling Adults and Children  
*Valerie C. Cluzet, Jeffrey S. Gerber, Irving Nachamkin, Joshua P. Metlay, Theoklis E. Zaoutis, Meghan F. Davis, Kathleen G. Julian, Darren R. Linkin, Susan E. Coffin, David J. Margolis, Judd E. Hollander, Warren B. Bilker, Xiaoyan Han, Rakesh D. Mistry, Laurence J. Gavin, Pam Tolomeo, Jacqueline A. Wise, Mary K. Wheeler, Baofeng Hu, Neil O. Fishman, David Royer, and Ebbing Lautenbach, for the Prevention Epicenters Network of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*
- 794** Outcomes of *Clostridium difficile* Infection in Hospitalized Leukemia Patients: A Nationwide Analysis  
*Ruihong Luo, Alan Greenberg, and Christian D. Stone*
- 802** Variation in Infection Prevention Practices in Dialysis Facilities: Results From the National Opportunity to Improve Infection Control in ESRD (End-Stage Renal Disease) Project  
*Carol E. Chenoweth, Stephen C. Hines, Kendall K. Hall, Rajiv Saran, John D. Kalbfleisch, Teri Spencer, Kelly M. Frank, Diane Carlson, Jan Deane, Erik Roys, Natalie Scholz, Casey Parrotte, and Joseph M. Messana*
- 807** Severity of Disease Estimation and Risk-Adjustment for Comparison of Outcomes in Mechanically Ventilated Patients Using Electronic Routine Care Data  
*Maaïke S. M. van Mourik, Karel G. M. Moons, Michael V. Murphy, Marc J. M. Bonten, and Michael Klompas, for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Prevention Epicenters*
- 816** Implementing a Multifaceted Intervention to Decrease Central Line–Associated Bloodstream Infections in SEHA (Abu Dhabi Health Services Company) Intensive Care Units: The Abu Dhabi Experience  
*Asad Latif, Bernadette Kelly, Hanan Edrees, Paula S. Kent, Sallie J. Weaver, Branislava Jovanovic, Hadeel Attallah, Kristin K. de Grouchy, Ali Al-Obaidli, Christine A. Goeschel, and Sean M. Berenholtz*
- 823** Prevention of Needle-Stick Injuries in Healthcare Facilities: A Meta-Analysis  
*Lukman H. Tarigan, Manuel Cifuentes, Margaret Quinn, and David Kriebel*

### Concise Communications

- 830** Infrequent Air Contamination With *Acinetobacter baumannii* of Air Surrounding Known Colonized or Infected Patients  
*Clare Rock, Anthony D. Harris, J. Kristie Johnson, Werner E. Bischoff, and Kerri A. Thom*
- 833** *Commentary: Acinetobacter* in the Air: Did Maryland Get It Wrong?  
*L. Silvia Munoz-Price*
- 835** The Limits of Serial Surveillance Cultures in Predicting Clearance of Colonization with Carbapenemase-Producing *Enterobacteriaceae*  
*Jessica D. Lewis, Kyle B. Enfield, Amy J. Mathers, Eve T. Giannetta, and Costi D. Sifri*
- 838** Performance of the Present-on-Admission Indicator for *Clostridium difficile* Infection  
*Amy L. Pakyz, Julie A. Patterson, Christine Motzkus-Feagans, Samuel F. Hohmann, Michael B. Edmond, and Kate L. Lapane*
- 841** Frequency and Predictors of Seasonal Influenza Vaccination and Reasons for Refusal Among Patients at a Large Tertiary Referral Hospital  
*Max Masnick and Surbhi Leekha*

### Review Article

- 844** A Practical Approach to Avoiding Iatrogenic Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) from Invasive Instruments  
*Paul Brown and Michael Farrell*

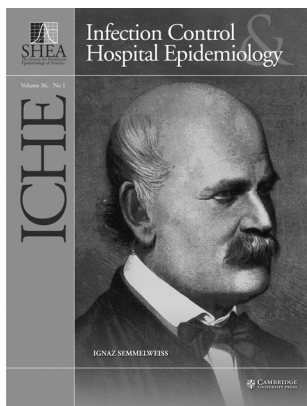
### Letters to the Editor

- 849** A New Practical Diagnostic Test for Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease  
*Paul Brown and Michael Farrell*
- 849** Pitfalls in Microbiological Sampling of the Healthcare Environment. A Response to “Evaluating a New Paradigm for Comparing Surface Disinfection in Clinical Practice”  
*Stephanie J. Dancer*
- 850** Reply to Dancer  
*Philip C. Carling*
- 851** Letter to the Editor Regarding “Impact of Vaginal-Rectal Ultrasound Examinations with Covered and Low-Level Disinfected Transducers on Infectious Transmissions in France” by Leroy et al.  
*Thomas Bénet, René Ecochard, and Philippe Vanhems*
- 852** Reply to Bénet et al  
*Sandrine Leroy, David J. Weber, and David D. Smith*
- 854** Letter to the Editor Regarding “Efficacy of Alcohol Gel for Removal of Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* from Hands of Colonized Patients”  
*Andreas F. Widmer and Sarah Tschudin-Sutter*
- 855** Reply to Widmer and Tschudin-Sutter  
*Venkata C. K. Sunkesula, Sirisha Kundrapu, David R. Macinga, and Curtis J. Donskey*
- 856** Response to McKinnell et al’s Original Article “Cost-Benefit Analysis From the Hospital Perspective of Universal Active Screening Followed by Contact Precautions for Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* Carriers”  
*Mary Teresa O’Riordan, Patricia Harrington, Kathleen Mac Lellen, Máirín Ryan, and Hilary Humphreys*
- 857** Reply to O’Riordan et al  
*James A. McKinnell, Sarah M. Bartsch, Bruce Y. Lee, Susan S. Huang, and Loren G. Miller*



- 858** An Adult Returned Traveler from Dubai Hospitalized with an Influenza-Like Illness (ILI): Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) or Influenza? Infection Control Implications from a Near MERS Case  
*Burke A. Cunha, Marie Dumont, and Eileen Abruzzo*
- 860** High Endemic Rates of OXA-23-Producing Carbapenem-Resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* Isolates Caused by the Persistence of Major Clones in Hospitals in a Brazilian City 5 Years After an Outbreak  
*Mariana Pagano, Juliana Barin, Andreza F. Martins, and Alexandre P. Zavaski*
- 862** Primary and Secondary Literature Should Be Distinguished When Searching for Data Used in Systematic Reviews of Nosocomial Outbreaks  
*Ralf-Peter Vonberg and Petra Gastmeier*
- 864** Availability of Automatic Water Tap in Hospitals in Bangkok, Thailand  
*Sora Yasri and Viroj Wiwanitkit*
- 864** Epidemiology of Antimicrobial Resistance in an Oncology Center in Eastern India  
*Sanjay Bhattacharya, Gaurav Goel, Sukdev Mukherjee, Jaydip Bhaumik, and Mammen Chandy*
- 866** Infection Control Challenges of Infrequent and Rare Fungal Pathogens: Lessons from Disseminated *Fusarium* and *Kodamaea ohmeri* Infections  
*Krishnendu Das, Arpita Bhattacharyya, Mammen Chandy, Manas Kumar Roy, Gaurav Goel, Lalawmpuia Hmar, Sanjay Bhattacharya, Paromita Roy, and Arunaloke Chakrabarti*
- 868** The Importance of Chemical Solutions Used for Cleaning Stainless Steel Surgical Instruments in the Central Sterile Supply Department  
*Debabrata Basu*

## About the cover:



Starting in 2015, the cover format of each volume of *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology* will highlight one of the many professionals throughout history who not only recognized how disease might be spread, but also how epidemiological principles could be applied to reduce healthcare associated infections.

Ignaz Semmelweis (1818-1865) was a Hungarian physician who was appointed an assistant in obstetrics at the Allgemeines Krankenhaus in Vienna. He recognized that women delivered by midwife trainees were significantly less likely to die of puerperal fever than those delivered by physicians or medical students. He hypothesized that puerperal fever could be spread to mothers at the time of delivery by the hands of obstetricians that became contaminated while performing autopsies on women who had died in the maternity ward. Controlled trials of hand washing with chloride of lime solution and disinfection of instruments showed that he could reduce infections among the women cared for by physicians by almost 20-fold. Unfortunately, he did not publish his findings which contributed to the lack of acceptance of antisepsis among senior staff; Semmelweis' academic appointment was not renewed. He left for Budapest, but his beliefs failed to gain traction among colleagues in Hungary. Semmelweis' increasingly erratic and angry behavior led to commitment to an asylum; he died there within a few short weeks at the age of 47 years. Contrary to legend, Semmelweis' autopsy suggests that he did not die of streptococcal gangrene, but rather of trauma related to beatings inflicted by the guards at the asylum and an early Alzheimer-type dementia.

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