

Priority Setting for Future Infection Control work in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories

Current and coming Pandemic Influenza Preparedness activities should trigger infection control developments or strengthening in the PICTs in the 2 coming years.

Based on the issues for progress identified by the IC specialist consultant to the PPHSN, it was agreed the following priorities should be then addressed:

First of all:

In all PICTs, the establishment of ICPs at least at national level, and infection control programmes (as able given resource allocation limitation).

To assist with this SPC is to act as an advocate on behalf of PICNet to Ministers/Secretaries of Health, for cooperation and collaboration Ministries of Health, SPC and PICNet members

This should be supported by

1. The development of regional Infection Control and prevention guidelines specific to the needs of the member states of SPC
2. The continued development and facilitation of the Pacific regional Infection Control Network (PICNet), with
 - The provision of mentoring opportunities to those responsible for the management of infection control programmes in member states
 - The provision of specialist and technical assistance in IC to member states as requiredThe PICNet steering committee was tasked to further the development of PICNet (achievement of objectives) and infection control issues in the Pacific
3. Training-related activities:
 - as a first priority, advocacy for the integration of Infection Control core competencies into curricula for healthcare professions provided within the region
 - then facilitation of specialist Infection Control training, including healthcare associated infection (HAI) surveillance methodology and practice.

Training activities should be carried out with the use of regional and national training bodies to assist establishment of IC professionals and health care workers in general

The establishment of minimum requirements and case definitions for surveillance of healthcare associated infections will only be possible if an ICP is in place and an IC programme is implemented.

Note: the provision of specialist assistance in outbreak investigations to member states is already taken care of by the recommendation from the Samoa Commitment to establish a regional response team – Regional EpiNet Team (RET)¹. PICNet will be a way to add IC expertise to the RET.

It was proposed that an IC regional meeting for all PICTs be organized in the coming year or so, followed, if possible, by annual/regular IC meetings. This can be linked to a meeting of PICNet Steering Committee.

¹ The Regional EpiNet Team (RET) should be established by creating a pool of experts and professionals among the countries and territories in the Pacific in order to support national and territorial responses to outbreaks and to build capacity.