

3.11 Deputy K.C. Lewis of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding efforts to prevent outbreaks of M.R.S.A:

Further to reports of more outbreaks of M.R.S.A. (Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus) will the Minister be taking steps to ensure that medical staff do not wear their uniforms home and have adequate changing facilities and if not, why not?

The Deputy of Trinity (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

The hospital operates a search and destroy policy with regard to M.R.S.A. infection and this ensures that the incident of infection remains very low in comparison to the U.K. The hospital has not had recent M.R.S.A. outbreaks but our ability to isolate patients with M.R.S.A. in single rooms is not always practical or possible and, in such instance, such patients may be nursed in one area. This is accepted practice and, as such, does not imply an outbreak. In general, medical and surgical ward staff are allocated dedicated uniforms and, in some clinical areas, changing facilities may be limited, therefore, some staff travel to and from work in their uniforms which should be covered. These uniforms are laundered at home which is standard practice in the U.K. trusts so as not to overwhelm the hospital laundry facility. It is hoped to incorporate better changing facilities within any new refurbishment of the hospital infrastructure. Also the staff in some high risk areas, such as the renal unit, accident and emergency, theatres and intensive care, do wear scrubs and the staff change in and out of scrubs at the beginning and end of each shift.

The Bailiff:

Your time has expired, Minister.

3.11.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Could the Minister please inform us, if not today, quite succinctly in the future, whether or not our staff in Jersey as nurses and doctors are tested for M.R.S.A. and whether or not U.K. doctors and nurses are tested for M.R.S.A.? If they are, how often does that occur?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I do not have that information but I can get it to the Deputy and States Members.

3.11.2 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I wish to emphasise that I have the utmost admiration and respect for health care personnel in Jersey. They face huge challenges in the every day battle against health care associated infections like M.R.S.A. and C. difficile, but the simple precautions should be enforced such as uniform cleaning facilities and ...

The Bailiff:

This is the time for supplementary questions, not speeches. Come to the question please.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

This is the question, Sir. Visiting relatives should also be required to use antibacterial hand cleaning gel before and after entering wards and be requested not to sit on the beds. Does the Minister not agree?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Infection control is very important not only for the staff, the doctors, but also for visitors and as I am sure you are aware, if you go into wards, there are a lot of surgical gel appliances around each ward and the relatives are encouraged to use it sensibly and to use it as they go in and as they out of the ward.