AORN Survey: Better SSI Prevention Strategies Needed

IrriMax

Surgical site infections (SSIs) are a concern for 96 percent of operating room nurses responding to an industry survey at the recent Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) 60th Annual Congress in San Diego. Adding to that concern is the need for new and better infection prevention strategies which the majority (92 percent) of respondents think is very important.

In a random sample of 145 operating room nurses responding to the survey conducted at AORN by IrriMax® Corporation, 64 percent indicate concerns are increasing about surgical site infections in their facility. In addition, 68 percent think the increase in the incidence of antibiotic-resistant infections, along with the lack of new antibiotics to treat infections (29 percent) build a case for concern.

Surgical Wound Irrigation

Survey respondents report they most frequently use normal saline for irrigation, while normal saline with an added antibiotic is the second most frequently used. Respondents also indicated Bacitracin is the most frequently added antibiotic to normal saline irrigation in their facilities, followed in smaller usage by Polymyxin, Neomycin, Vancomycin and Gentamicin.

When respondents were asked which antibiotic products listed have an ‘indication for use’ in surgical wound irrigation, answers included Bacitracin, Polymyxin, Neomycin, Vancomycin, Gentamicin and Povidone Iodine.

“Actually none of the above have an indication for use in surgical wound irrigation,” says Carolyn Twomey, RN, BSN, vice president, clinical affairs, IrriMax Corporation. “In fact, in the newest HICPAC Recommended Guidelines it states the use of Vancomycin solution for topical application or irrigation should be discouraged,” 1 adds Twomey.

When asked if an FDA-cleared wound cleansing and debridement product, with 0.05% chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) for irrigation, was available, 93 percent of respondents answered they would be likely to use it instead of what is currently used in their facility.

With hospitals strategically using CHG bundles for decolonization, a majority (97 percent) of respondents think that adding a wound cleansing and irrigation device with 0.05% CHG would be a positive addition to this practice. Further, 93 percent indicate that having an FDA-cleared, pre-packaged, disposable and sterile device with 0.05% CHG for irrigation, would help drive efficiency in the O.R.

“Patient outcomes may be positively impacted when hospital and surgery center team members are knowledgeable about the latest approaches to surgical wound irrigation,” suggests Twomey. “For example, IrriSept has been shown safe for cleansing, debridement and irrigation during surgical procedures. It provides an effective alternative to normal saline.”

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