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Re: Invitation to join the national point prevalence survey of healthcare-associated infections & antibiotic use in Irish long-term care facilities

January 25th 2016.

Dear Colleague,

Your facility is invited to participate in a voluntary national survey of healthcare-associated infections (HCAI) and antibiotic use in long-term care facilities (HALT), which will take place this May. This will be the fourth HALT survey conducted in Ireland and forms part of a European-wide survey coordinated by the European Centre for Disease Prevention & Control. In Ireland, the HALT survey will be coordinated by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and overseen by a multi-disciplinary steering group under the auspices of the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland. All Irish long-term care facilities are strongly-encouraged to participate in this important national resident safety survey. Ethical approval is not required, as the HALT survey forms part of a high level audit cycle which will enable individual facilities to review their own performance.

There was excellent participation from Irish long-term care facilities in previous HALT surveys increasing from 69 (2010) to 190 (2013) and we hope to recruit even more Irish long-term care facilities to the 2016 HALT survey, inviting all prior participants to repeat their survey and welcoming new participants to undertake their first survey. Your facility's involvement is important and will provide you with an overview of HCAI and antibiotic use in your facility, as well as the opportunity to use the results to plan HCAI prevention and improved antibiotic use initiatives.

Once your facility has completed the HALT survey in May and submitted the data collected for analysis by HPSC, your facility's local HALT report will be issued in autumn 2016. Data will be further analysed at HPSC to produce a national HALT report, with the overall results for Ireland and the breakdown of results by the categories of participating facilities (e.g., general nursing homes, intellectual disability, psychiatric and palliative care facilities etc). While the names of participating facilities will be listed in the national HALT report, the HCAI and antimicrobial use prevalence results of individual facilities will not be published.

There have been some changes to the survey protocol since the last HALT survey in 2013. It is mandatory that at least one person from each participating facility attends a regional training session to be held during April 2016. The only exception to this rule is the scenario where one trained staff member will collect data in a number of facilities (e.g., a group of nursing homes).

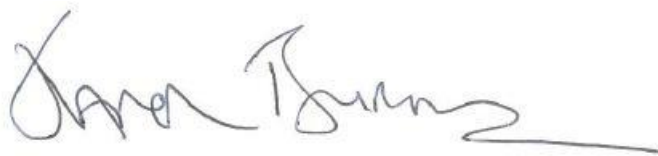
The Director of Nursing/General Manager/Deputy of each long-term care facility should **return a completed registration form (page 3 of this letter) to HPSC by Friday February 19th 2016**, indicating your facility's intention to participate in the survey during May 2016 and providing contact information for your local HALT lead coordinator, who will require local approval for leave and associated travel expenses to attend a regional HALT training course in April 2016 (dates and venues to be confirmed). Your local HALT coordinator will also need to be released from their usual duties to collect and return your facility's data. In prior HALT surveys, data collection typically took one day in a facility with 50 residents.

If you have any further queries about the 2016 HALT survey, please contact: HALT@hpsc.ie

When the registration process is completed, each local HALT lead coordinator will receive an e-mail from HPSC with further information on booking their HALT training course in April 2016.

Finally, it is planned that the theme of the 2016 Annual Safe Patient Care course, which is jointly coordinated by HPSC and RCSI will focus on the long-term care sector. HALT 2016 participants will receive notification and priority to register for this course, which normally takes place each September.

Kind regards,



Dr Karen Burns, Consultant Microbiologist, HPSC & HALT 2016 National Coordinator.

On behalf of the HALT 2016 National Steering Group:

Further information on the HALT survey in Ireland is available at the following link:

<http://www.hpsc.ie/hpsc/A-Z/MicrobiologyAntimicrobialResistance/InfectionControlandHAI/Surveillance/HCAIinlongtermcarefacilities/>

**Facility Registration Form for the 2016 Survey of Healthcare-Associated Infection & Antibiotic Use
in Long-Term Care Facilities (HALT 2016)**

Instructions:

1. Sections A and B to be completed and signed by the Director of Nursing/General Manager/his or her Deputy of each participating facility
2. **The deadline for registration to participate in HALT 2016 is Friday February 19th**
 - a. Scan completed form and e-mail to: HALT@hpsc.ie
 - b. Fax completed form to: 01-856 1299
 - c. Post completed form to: HALT Administrator, HPSC, 25-27 Middle Gardiner St, Dublin D01 A4A3.

Section A – This facility intends to participate in HALT 2016:

Facility name: _____

Address: _____

SIGNED: _____

Director of Nursing/General Manager/Deputy

E-mail address:* _____

This facility participated in HALT 2013 (circle answer): YES NO

Section B

Our nominated local HALT coordinator is: _____

Job Title: _____

Our coordinator attended HALT training in 2013 (circle answer): YES NO

E-mail address for local HALT coordinator:* _____

Work telephone number (direct): _____

***All future correspondence on HALT 2016, including information on registration for HALT training courses in April 2016 will be sent to these e-mail addresses. It is critical that in-use e-mail addresses are provided**