

## Lessons and Learnings

The Clinical Excellence Commission, Patient Safety Directorate developed the following summary from COVID-19 Serious Incident Reviews.

### COVID-19 – IPAC Fundamentals for patient safety

- ⇒ Staff members with any Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) symptoms should not attend work and should be tested
- ⇒ The causative agent for patients with ARI symptoms should be identified where possible
- ⇒ A systematic process for in-hospital contact tracing should be completed
- ⇒ Encourage visitors to wear masks while visiting and not to visit if they have any ARI symptoms
- ⇒ Patient testing should be based on risk assessment and the needs of patients

### Case Study

A COVID-19 outbreak occurred in a facility, with a total of five patients on the ward being identified as COVID-19 positive.

On day 12 of their admission, Patient A reported worsening shortness of breath and the following day returned a positive result for COVID-19. Antiviral therapy was commenced however Patient A progressed to decreased levels of consciousness and difficulty swallowing. They passed away with family in attendance, five days after their diagnosis with COVID-19.

Patient A was initially located in a two bedded shared room, with shared bathroom facilities and common areas. A review of the outbreak identified two potential sources:

- A staff member who had symptoms of COVID-19 provided clinical care to Patient A while they were symptomatic. This staff member tested positive to COVID-19 during the outbreak.
- A visitor of Patient B who was in a single room reported they had tested positive to COVID-19 and had visited the ward while they were likely to be infectious

The review also found that:

- Patients and visitors were not always compliant with wearing masks.
- Contact tracing was not conducted in a systematic way.
- COVID-19 testing on the ward had been sent as routine PCR testing instead of rapid PCR, delaying notification and management.

### CEC Resources

[IPAC Practice Handbook](#)

We value your feedback. If you have any questions or comments about this report, please email:

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