

Newly Published HAI Series for Clinical Laboratory Professionals

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We are pleased to announce that two of our authors, [Rodney E. Rohde](#) and [Amber Mitchell](#), have collaborated on a series of FOCUS articles for the *Clinical Laboratory Science Journal* that will be of interest to readers of InfectionControl.tips.

Medical laboratory professionals play an integral role in the healthcare system by not only providing diagnostic services that directly impact therapeutic management of patients, but also by offering their expertise in interpretation of the increasing number and types of healthcare associated infections (HAIs). The latest advances in research, education and government actions affecting the clinical laboratory profession are constantly evolving, and has recently been published in a four-part FOCUS series.

This FOCUS series of articles on HAIs is aimed to inform laboratory professionals, business thought leaders, medical/health educators, healthcare professionals, and the clinical diagnostics field at large about the past, current and future paradigms for HAI detection, management and national and state strategies for reduction of these deadly infections. Each article focuses on a different field related to HAI, but includes an explanation of the public health and clinical rationale that has led to the current practices in the field. These reports are presented with the goal of highlighting timely and pertinent affairs in the fast-paced and evolving field of HAIs and where they intersect with all of us. Following is a summary of the four articles that make up the FOCUS series.

Part 1: Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs): The Perfect Storm has Arrived!

This article summarizes the incidence, prevalence, financial, and public health burden of HAIs in the United States. It focuses on informing clinical laboratory personnel about the critical role they play in helping healthcare facilities combat preventable infections.

Part 2: The Perfect Storm: Emerging Trends and Pathogens in Healthcare

An overview of the current state of affairs with respect to vulnerable populations, diverse healthcare sites and levels of healthcare workers, increased pathogens and their resistance, and responses by our national healthcare strategy to reduce HAIs is featured next. Featured in this article are subject-matter experts who address global problems associated with the American healthcare strategy, and emphasize that a one-size-fits-all program is not sufficient for the diverse populations throughout the country. Understanding the healthcare environment and its patients allows the medical laboratory to create a health plan that caters to its local population.

Part 3: The Legal Landscape: HAI Public Reporting in the United States

The limitations on local healthcare policies play an important role in how clinicians are able to improve patient outcomes. This article pays particular attention to policy, legal and federal influences on state-level HAI program

initiatives and reporting, the progression of state-level initiatives to reduce HAIs, the core provisions of state HAI reporting laws, and healthcare worker infection and illness reporting mandates.

Part 4: The Changing Role of the Healthcare Environment

Medical laboratory professionals are lauded for their ability to integrate all this information, and make the decisions to best reflect what the local population needs. Part of that involves understanding not just what is required at the moment, but also in the future. The future healthcare environment is in flux, and a successful healthcare program is able to adjust to these changes. Through discussion on the acquisition and transfer of microbial populations, the relationship to the risk of infection and illness in both patient and healthcare worker populations, and summaries of recently published scientific evidence related to transmission of microbes from environmental surfaces including textiles, we are provided with a glimpse of the current and future HAI trends.

Ultimately, the goal is to have a future with zero preventable HAIs, but that it will take a multimodal approach on multiple fronts of the battlefield. From global healthcare professionals, to private and public government agencies, professional organizations, and the general public, it is the responsibility of everyone to confront this war head-on.

While full texts of articles are available to only members of ASCLS, they are available for purchase online at: <http://members.ascls.org/journal>