



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF HEALTH & PREVENTION

National Infection Prevention and Control Program

United Arab Emirates



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Authors:

- Najiba Mohamed Abdulrazzaq
- Joseph Boutros Tannous

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Abeer Khalaf, Abeer Khalil, Ajish Thankachan, Elias Tannous, Entesar Alhammadi, Hajar Aldhanhani, Hana M S Saleh Salama, Huda Mohamed Al Ameri, Jithin Raj Rajendran Pillai, Laila Mohamed Jasim Ali AlDabal, Maryam Omar Ahmad Ali Bin Haider, Messaouda Belfakir, Nihar Ranjan Dash, Obaida Abdallah Merheb, Rabiaa Alshihhi, Tabrikah Alshaibah



Contents

No	Heading	Page Number
1	Background	4
2	Governance and Leadership	4
3	Objectives of the National IPC Program	4
4	Purpose and Scope	5
5	Structure of the National IPC Program	5
6	Core Functions of the National IPC Subcommittee	6
7	Conclusion	8



1. Background

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) is a fundamental component of patient safety, quality of care, and health system resilience. Effective IPC programs reduce the risk of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs), protect healthcare workers, patients, and visitors, and contribute to the containment of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all countries establish a national IPC program with clearly defined governance, objectives, resources, and monitoring mechanisms. In line with these recommendations, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has established a National IPC Program coordinated at the national level and implemented across all healthcare settings.

2. Governance and Leadership

The National IPC Program and its activities are overseen and coordinated by the National Subcommittee for IPC in the Health Sector, operating under the National Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Committee. The National IPC Subcommittee provides strategic leadership, oversight, and coordination for IPC activities across the UAE health system, ensuring alignment with national health priorities and international best practices.

3. Objectives of the National IPC Program

The objectives of the National Infection Prevention and Control Program are to:

- a. Prevent the acquisition and transmission of infections in healthcare settings across all levels of care.
- b. Ensure IPC programs are in place and effectively implemented at national, regional, and healthcare facility levels.
- c. Coordinate IPC activities with other relevant programs and sectors, including antimicrobial resistance, emergency preparedness, and public health surveillance.



4. Purpose and Scope

The National IPC Program aims to:

- Provide a national framework for IPC activities and practices at both national and healthcare facility levels.
- Coordinate responses to community-acquired infectious diseases, whether endemic or epidemic, that may be amplified through healthcare delivery.
- Minimize the environmental and occupational impact of healthcare-associated infections.
- Contribute to the prevention of the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance.
- Ensure the application of IPC principles across all healthcare settings, including public and private sectors, acute care, primary care, long-term care, and other healthcare environments.

5. Structure of the National IPC Program

The National IPC Program is approved by national leadership and established with:

- Clearly defined objectives and functions
- A defined scope of responsibilities
- Designated oversight mechanisms
- The program is overseen by the National IPC Subcommittee, which represents multiple health authorities and service providers, including:
 - Ministry of Health and Prevention (MOHAP)
 - Emirates Health Services (EHS)
 - Department of Health – Abu Dhabi (DoH)
 - Dubai Health
 - Representatives from public and private healthcare facilities



Members of the National IPC Subcommittee are qualified in IPC practices through appropriate education, training, experience, certification, and/or clinical authority.

6. Core Functions of the National IPC Subcommittee

The National IPC Subcommittee oversees and coordinates all national IPC activities, including but not limited to:

6.1 Strategy, Planning, and Coordination

- Developing the national IPC vision, rationale, strategies, and action plans.
- Conducting situational analyses and gap assessments of IPC capacities and practices across the UAE.
- Coordinating, standardizing, and streamlining IPC efforts within and across stakeholders and healthcare authorities.
- Promoting and advocating for the National IPC Program at all levels of the health system

6.2 Guidelines and Standards

Establishing national IPC guidelines that are:

- Evidence-based and comprehensive
- Consistent with current scientific knowledge
- Aligned with national regulations and international standards, including WHO, CDC, APIC, and other recognized bodies
- Ensuring guidelines apply across all levels and types of healthcare facilities
- Regularly reviewing and updating IPC guidelines based on emerging evidence and national priorities



6.3 Capacity Building and Education

- Supporting capacity building at national, healthcare authority, and facility levels
- Facilitating access to guidance documents, tools, and standardized training programs
- Promoting competency-based IPC education and continuous professional development for healthcare workers

6.4 Surveillance and Monitoring

- Identifying, collecting, and analyzing national data on healthcare-associated infections, including:
 - Surgical Site Infections (SSI)
 - Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infections (CLABSI)
 - Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infections (CAUTI)
 - Ventilator-Associated Events (VAE)
- Using surveillance data to:
 - Establish national benchmarks
 - Monitor trends and performance
 - Inform policy decisions and targeted interventions
 - Promoting standardized surveillance definitions and methodologies across healthcare facilities

6.5 Quality Improvement and Evaluation

- Supporting the integration of IPC into quality improvement and patient safety initiatives
- Monitoring implementation and effectiveness of IPC programs at facility level
- Encouraging the use of multimodal strategies to improve IPC practices



- Periodically evaluating the national IPC program and recommending improvements

7. Conclusion

The National IPC of the UAE provides a comprehensive, coordinated, and evidence-based approach to reducing HAI, protecting patients and healthcare workers, and strengthening health system resilience. Through strong governance, national coordination, standardized guidelines, and continuous monitoring, the program supports the delivery of safe, high-quality healthcare in line with WHO recommendations and national priorities.