



Don't you know how you just made me feel? Patient's experience isolated in contact precautions for MRSA in a regional setting – A Qualitative Study



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Background: Contact precautions are the most frequently utilised strategy in reducing the transmission of infectious diseases and multi-resistant organisms within healthcare facilities.

The patient experience in isolation for infection control reasons has been the subject of studies conducted in tertiary or large metropolitan facilities as well as specialised units. These studies have shown that isolated patients are at higher risk for preventable adverse events, they are less satisfied with their care, and have less contact with healthcare workers.

Aims: This qualitative study describes the experience of patients isolated for MRSA in regional health care facilities.

Study Design: A phenomenological approach was utilised and data was collected via semistructured interviews (N= 6). Interviews were recorded using audio digital technology and field notes were recorded immediately following the interview. All interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and open coded. Axial coding assisted the development of themes and extensive field notes augmented analysis of the transcripts.

Results: Three major themes were identified

1. *'They will not talk about it': Information about Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)*: Participants lacked information about MRSA and described poor notification practices, their inability to obtain concise information from healthcare workers as well as the reluctance of healthcare workers to discuss MRSA.
2. *'Locked in these rooms': Care in hospital*: Participants described both positive and negative aspects of being isolated in a single room
3. *'What can I do about it? Nothing': Surrendering to MRSA*: Participants reported persistent concerns of transmitting MRSA to their families and being conscious of their own hygiene practices

Conclusions: The experience of patients isolated for MRSA in regional settings mirrored those of previous studies conducted in tertiary or metropolitan facilities. Inconsistent staff practices and compliance with infection control practices were highlighted as concerns. Participants reported feeling lonely, bored, embarrassed and ashamed.

For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'

Annmaree is a Clinical Nurse Consultant in the Infection Management and Control Service and based in the Shoalhaven Hospital on the NSW south coast. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Health Science Nursing and Graduate Diploma Clinical Practice in Infection Control. Annmaree is a passionate patient advocate, and this project provided the opportunity to identify issues and improve the patients experience in isolation.

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