Discrepancy between self-reported and observed hand hygiene behavior in healthcare professionals. A study based on theory of planned behavior

Nazari R¹, Rezaee R², Saatsaz S³, Haji Ahmadi M⁴

¹. MSc in Midwifery, Faculty Member, Amol University of Medical Sciences, Iran
². MSc in Social Medicine, Amol University of Medical Sciences, Iran
³. MSc in Midwifery, Faculty Member, Amol University of Medical Sciences, Iran
⁴. MSc in Midwifery, Faculty Member, Amol University of Medical Sciences, Iran

Background: In recent years, hand hygiene is easiest, cheapest and most effective ways to infection prevention. But the evidence does indicate that health workers do very poor hand hygiene practice. Therefore, this study describes intention and attitude of hand hygiene behavior and comparison of self-reported and observed hand hygiene behavior in healthcare professionals based on theory of planned behavior.

Method: 351 health care workers (doctor, nurse and other therapists) in 4 circumstances of hand washing (totally 216 positions) were observed and how their behavior was reflected in the check list. Each of them responded a questionnaire based on the theory of planned behavior. The questions were developed in such a way that can be measured Perdue variables of the behavior: "subjective norms", "attitude", "perceived behavioral control" and "intention".

Results: HCPs were washed their hands in 491 (71.3%) positions and more. This value was less than them self-reported (80.4%). Perdue variables predicted reported behaviors (P < 0.05) but failed to predict the actual behavior (P > 0.05).

Conclusion: This study suggests that actual performance of hand washing of HCWs was poor and less than their self-reported. The theory of planned behavior showed that institutions have been success to motivate and intention, but it is necessary that they use more serious strategies for monitoring and improving this important health behavior.

Keywords: hand hygiene, theory of planned behavior, self-reported, observed

*J Mashhad School Nurs Midw* 11(1): 13-73