

Med students, residents rarely perform stethoscope hygiene

7 April 2015



"Stethoscope hygiene is rarely performed by trainees," the authors write. "The very low rate of stethoscope hygiene after contact with non-isolation patients represents a current and potentially serious safety threat."

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(HealthDay)—Stethoscope hygiene is rarely performed by trainee physicians, according to a research letter published online April 2 in the *Journal of Hospital Medicine*.

Ian Harold Jenkins, M.D., from the University of California in San Diego, and colleagues observed student and trainee physician [stethoscope](#) hygiene performance during [hospital medicine](#) rotations. Stethoscope hygiene was observed at three sites over an 11-month period. Overall, 352 [opportunities](#) for stethoscope hygiene were observed. Trainees were unaware that their stethoscope hygiene performance was being recorded.

The researchers found that doctors or students used stethoscope hygiene in 16 percent of the opportunities to do so (58 encounters). Twenty of these events occurred after a trainee observed an attending physician performing stethoscope hygiene. Excluding events that were triggered by an attending [physician](#), stethoscope hygiene was performed in 11 percent of 332 opportunities. The rate of stethoscope hygiene performance was significantly higher in isolation versus non-isolation rooms (82.7 versus 4.6 percent; P

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