

Lean six methodology can cut health care-linked infections

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(HealthDay)—Application of the Lean Six Sigma (LSS) methodology

can reduce the risk of health care-associated infections (HAI) among patients undergoing surgical procedures, according to a study published online Nov. 18 in the *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*.

Emma Montella, M.D., from the University Hospital "Federico II" of Naples in Italy, and colleagues assessed the application of LSS [methodology](#) to reduce the number of patients with sentinel bacterial infections who are at risk of HAI. Using a multidisciplinary team of physicians and academics, LSS methodology was applied in the general surgery department. Data were collected on more than 20,000 patients who underwent a wide range of surgical procedures. To examine the effects of the methodology implemented, the authors compared the preintervention (January 2011 to December 2012) and postintervention (January 2013 to December 2014) phases.

The researchers observed a 20 percent reduction in the average number of hospitalization days between preintervention and control phases, while the reduction in the number of days of hospitalization amounted to 36. The LSS methodology ensured a significant decrease in the number of HAIs in patients undergoing surgical interventions. Implementation of the intervention resulted in a significant reduction in the number of hospitalization days and the [number](#) of patients with HAIs.

"This approach, together with other tools for reducing the risk of infection (surveillance, epidemiological guidelines, and training of health care personnel), could be applied to redesign and improve a wide range of health care processes," the authors write.

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