

An audit on physical distancing and face mask guidelines compliance amongst health care workers in a tertiary care Irish hospital during COVID-19

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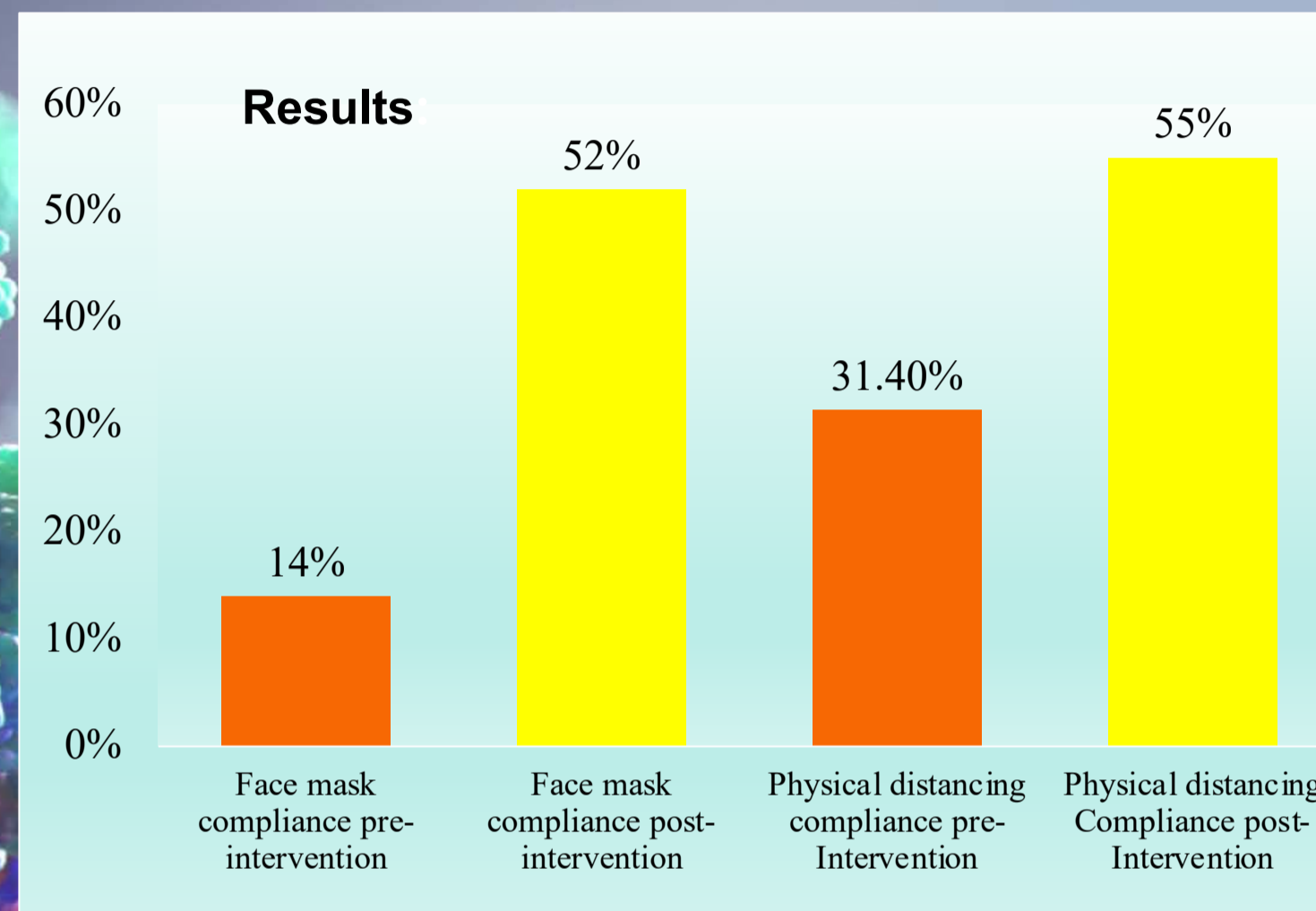
HPSC figures report that more than 2/3rd of Healthcare Workers with COVID-19 caught the virus at work

Background:

Covid-19 is an emerging, rapidly evolving pandemic. Since its emergence, severe coronavirus 2(SARS-CoV-2), which causes covid-19, has become a global health threat¹. Around quarter(23-25%) of covid-19 cases(40,086) in Ireland are Healthcare workers(9536)². To break the transmission cycle of Covid-19, National guidelines highly recommend physical distancing and usage of facemask among HCWs³.

Methods:

Prospective Cross-Sectional convenience sampling was undertaken over three months period with quality improvement interventions in between the two arms of audit cycle. HCWs were observed on maintaining physical distance(approximately 2 metres) and face-mask use was considered as a requirement for all encounters, lasting 15 minutes or longer, with other HCWs where a distance of 2m could not be maintained.



Quality improvement interventions:

- Signboards at the hospital entrance
- Floorings in overcrowded areas, outside lifts and changing areas
- A 'keep to the left' walking system in the hospital
- Modification of seating arrangements to ensure physical distance and regular communication and reminders to all HCWs.

Conclusion:

Improvement in compliance with face mask and physical distancing guidelines was observed after various interventions were undertaken within the hospital. Ongoing interventions to improve compliance and audits of these interventions are consistently needed to ensure adherence with COVID-19 prevention guidelines amongst HCW as Ireland continues to face the risk of further surges of COVID-19.

References:

1. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(20\)30164-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(20)30164-X/fulltext)
2. <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/surveillance/covid-19casesinhealthcareworkers>
3. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/protect-yourself-and-others.html>

Locations observed

