Sunnybrook
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
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June 15, 2010

Dear

Re: Point-prevalence survey for antimicrobial resistance in Canadian hospitals

The emergence of antibiotic-resistant organisms such as MRSA, VRE and *Clostridium difficile* is a major public health concern. These organisms are known to increase patient mortality and morbidity and are associated with prolonged hospital length of stay, and excess hospital costs. Nosocomial acquisition of MRSA, VRE, and *C. difficile* has been identified as an important indicator of quality of patient care, and patient safety initiatives have attempted to implement strategies to reduce the risk of spread of these organisms in hospitals. Many provinces in Canada have mandated public reporting of hospital rates of infections caused by these organisms.

Despite the concern about antimicrobial resistance, remarkably little is known about the burden of disease caused by antibiotic resistant organisms in Canada. In particular, there is no information available regarding the prevalence of these organisms. Prevalence data are an essential complement to incidence data for the accurate assessment of the burden of disease associated with antimicrobial resistance, and are needed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of hospital and public health interventions.

We are therefore inviting all Canadian acute care hospitals with more than 50 beds to participate in a one-day survey in November of 2010 to determine the prevalence of MRSA, VRE, and *C. difficile* in Canadian hospitals. We very much hope that you will consider participating.

If you agree to participate, we will ask you to select one work day (Monday to Friday) during the two-week period from November 8 to 21, 2010. On that day, we will ask you to identify all patients who are known to be colonized or infected with MRSA and VRE, and all patients recently diagnosed with and/or being treated for *C. difficile* infection (see protocol for details). A brief questionnaire will be completed for each of these patients describing demographic and clinical characteristics. We anticipate it should take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete each questionnaire. We are also requesting that another brief questionnaire be completed describing your hospital; it should take less than 1 hour to collect the necessary information and complete the hospital survey.

All data will be handled with complete confidentiality; the information you send us will not allow us to identify any patient, and your hospital's results will not be provided to anyone in a way that identifies your hospital. Since all hospital and

patients are assigned a unique number there are no risks involved with being part of this study. Data will be analyzed centrally by the study team. Hospitals will be coded in the files, and all files will be password protected and stored only on secure servers. Any questionnaires submitted via fax will be kept locked on site, with any identifiers other than study code (e.g. fax headers) removed before storage. When the analysis is complete, each hospital will receive a summary of their own data, compared to all hospitals, and hospitals with similar profiles. No data will allow anyone else to identify your hospital. Our plan is to publish the results of this prevalence survey in a scientific medical journal.

This proposal has been approved by the Sunnybrook Health Sciences Research Ethics Board. As noted in the protocol, you may or may not need to submit this proposal to your research ethics board. If you do, we can provide you with assistance in preparing the submission if you need it.

In summary, if you agree to participate, you need to:

(1) Obtain any necessary administrative approvals, then complete the attached form indicating your intention to either participate or not to Dr. Andrew Simor by FAX at 416-480-6990 or e-mail to asimor@sunnybrook.ca.

(2) If necessary, submit the proposal to your hospital's research ethics board. If you are not sure if this is needed, we urge you check with your hospital. Many institutions will consider this a quality assurance project, not requiring ethics approval. We are also pleased to provide assistance if necessary.

(3) Plan for the one day point prevalence to be done on a work day between November 8 and 21, 2010.

(4) Select the individuals (ICPs or designates) who will identify patients and complete the patient questionnaires, and who will complete the hospital profile. These individuals should become familiar with attached definitions for MRSA, VRE, and *C difficile* patients and data collection tools (hospital profile and patient questionnaires). They can email any of us with questions about the definitions; in September or October, we will also be scheduling teleconferences to review the definitions and answer questions. We realize these definitions may differ from those used normally at your institution, but for the purposes of standardization and comparability, we ask that you use the definitions in Appendix III on the day chosen by your institution to participate;

(5) On the chosen day, use the hospital census and/or microbiology laboratory results to find eligible patients that have been identified by the institution as being positive for MRSA, VRE, and *C difficile*. (note: no additional testing is done for this study).

(6) Complete and submit hospital profile and patient questionnaires by the end of December 2010. .

We very much hope that you will consider participating. If you have any questions about participating, or require assistance with any part of the project at any time, please contact

Dr. Oscar Larios at olarios@gmail.com, Dr. Allison McGeer at 416-586-3118 or amcgeer@mtsinai.on.ca or Dr. Andrew Simor at 416-480-4549 or asimor@sunnybrook.ca.

Please find enclosed:

(1) Background information and the survey protocol
(2) Draft hospital profile questionnaire
(3) Draft patient questionnaire (and accompanying definitions to be used in completing the questionnaire)
(4) a one-page form to be returned to us indicating whether or not you will be able to participate (we request that you return this form to us, or send us an email indicating whether or not you are able to participate by July 16, 2010.
(5) a copy of the REB approval at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Toronto ON.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this proposal or protocol, please do not hesitate to contact any one of us. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to working with you on this prevalence survey.

Sincerely yours,

Andrew E. Simor, MD, FRCPC

Allison McGeer, MD, FRCPC

Brenda Coleman, PhD

Oscar Larios, MD, FRCPC