Reviewer's report

Title: A prospective study to examine the epidemiology of methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus and Clostridium difficile contamination in the general environment of three community hospitals in southern Ontario, Canada

Version: 2 Date: 10 October 2012

Reviewer: Maria Clara Clara Padoveze

Reviewer's report:

Overall, the author’s response to reviewers was satisfactory.

Discretionary Revisions

1. Background
The authors presented their hypothesis why they chose to study simultaneously C. difficile and S. aureus in the author’s response letter. I strongly recommend including this hypothesis in the Background text to be more suitable to the readers to understand the proposal of the study.

“The selection of surfaces to be investigated for contamination was based on data presented in previous studies” Please include the references for these studies.

No information was offered regarding the topography of patients sampling for colonization (anterior nares swabs?), as well the positivity rates. Since the sensibility of the swabs can vary for different topography this information is essential. The lack of information regarding how many patients was screened for MRSA colonization assessment is one of the weakness of the study.

4. Discussion
Probably the high overall prevalence of Hospital C was due to the high
prevalence found only in the 2nd visit and may not represent the endemic scenery of this hospital environment. The prevalence of 53.1% of MRSA in Hospital C at the 2nd visit showed that something different occurred during that period. However, the comments from the authors (page 17) on the visitor’s behavior and hospital staff speculation can be misleading. I strongly recommend not including comments that are not under strict scientific methods of observation and analysis. It should be pointed out that the MRSA Spa type predominant in the environment in the Hospital C was not found in any patients. This phenomenon is more likely to be related to low sensitivity of patient’s data sampling during the period than to any other situation.

I suggest choose the use of “overall prevalence” instead of “crude prevalence” in the whole text.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests