



ACIPC

Australasian College
for Infection Prevention and Control

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PEAK BODY CALLS FOR STANDARDISED TERMINOLOGY FOR PATHOGENS THAT TRANSMIT THROUGH THE AIR, ENDING CONFUSION IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR AND IMPROVING COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

Australasia's peak body for infection prevention and control has strongly recommended standardising the terminology used in Australia to describe the transmission pathways of pathogens transmitted through the air.

The position statement from the Australasian College for Infection Prevention and Control (ACIPC), *Terminology for pathogens that transmit through the air*, includes recommendations for specific and consistent terms to be used, including standard terminology to describe personal protective equipment (PPE).

"Inconsistencies in key terms have resulted in confusion of the use and understanding of transmission pathways." ACIPC President A/Prof Stéphane Bouchoucha said. "Standardising terminology as knowledge evolves is important for effective communication across all aspects of health, and to ensure all patients and staff are protected.

"The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted inconsistencies in terminology. The World Health Organization (WHO) 2024 report, *Global technical consultation report on proposed terminology for pathogens that transmit through the air*, proposes terminology for pathogens and transmission modes. ACIPC fully supports the use of the proposed terminology to provide a standardised framework across health and community settings, and to improve communication and infection prevention interventions in responding to existing and emerging threats."

ACIPC's recommendations call for:

- Standardising terminology for transmission by introducing **"infectious respiratory particles" (IRPs)**.
- Using **"transmission through the air"** with subcategories that recognise the spectrum of IRP particle size, including **airborne/inhalational transmission**, where **infectious respiratory particles (IRPs)** are inhaled after traveling short or long distances or remaining suspended in the air. And **direct deposition**, where IRPs follow a short-range trajectory and land on facial mucosal surfaces.
- Replacing **P2/N95 mask** with **"particulate filter respirators" (PFR)** for consistency.
- **Standardised terminology** for procedures and behaviours that increase **infectious respiratory particle (IRP) release** for PPE risk assessments: **Aerosol-generating procedures (AGPs)** (e.g., intubation, CPR, nebuliser use), and **Aerosol-generating behaviours (AGBs)** (e.g., coughing, shouting, heavy breathing) also increase IRP concentrations require **PFRs, eyewear/face shields**, in addition to standard PPE.

To read the position statement in full, click [here](#).

For more information, image and interview requests, contact office@acipc.org.au