



Partnering to Find Solutions to Everyday COVID-Related Problems

The COVID pandemic has created the conditions under which rapid action to find solutions for hundreds of everyday practice problems has become possible because of good will, creativity, and a collective desire to be part of making things better for health care and for society.

Many health care workers, including nurses, have suffered through fog on their face and eye protection as they care for patients on isolation precautions. Fog on personal protective equipment (PPE) has been a nuisance for years, but the recently intensified use of PPE has highlighted how much of a nuisance it really is. While anti-fog treatments are commercially available from snorkeling and diving companies, they are costly and not part of regular health authority ordering supplies, making widespread use of those products unlikely. Although it is the kind of problem that would be highly familiar to those who encounter it at the front lines of practice, it is among the many concerns that are difficult to “sell” as relevant to those who are in charge of health authority planning and procurement.

In mid-April, when NNPBC RN Council member Marcia Carr raised the alarm about this issue, Sally Thorne (President of that Council and a UBC Nursing faculty member) put out the problem of foggy face and eye protection on Twitter to see if anyone had, or might create, solutions. She has immediate responses from two UBC Okanagan Engineers, Professors Kevin Golovin and Mohammad Zarifi, each saying “How can I help?” and offering the services of their labs. Sally then reached out to Interior Health Authority Clinical Nurse Specialists Mary Kjørven and Sybil Hoiss. With the benefit of Sybil’s deep understanding of the practice context issues, Prof. Golovin then connected Interior Health with the team at [PRE Labs](#), a local Kelowna company interested in helping out during the pandemic in any way they could. PRE Lab’s primary focus previous to the pandemic has been creating high quality, comfortable body armour for law enforcement and military.

They tested a variety of soap products, as some soap can prevent fog without leaving residue that could impair vision. However, not all soaps have what it takes to do this well. Dr. Mazeyar Parvinezadeh Gashti, chief scientist at PRE Labs, says the right pH of the soap and the right combination of substances are required. After KGH Staff Development Educator, Denise Trussler, and Clinical Nurse Specialist for the Critical Care Network, Sybil Hoiss, supplied samples of soap products already in use in IH, PRE Labs identified a successful solution.

Dr Gashti discovered castile soap towelettes can be used to wipe the inside surface of face shields, goggles, and glasses for an anti-fog treatment. They recommend wetting the entire inside surface of the face or eye protection with this wipe and drying right away with an absorbent cloth or peri-wipe for best results.

This solution is very practical because staff already use these particular towelettes to clean a patient’s finger before checking blood glucose. The peri-wipes are also widely available throughout many health care sites. Finding a solution with product already available in hospital was a huge success and could not have happened without the collaborative assistance of UBC-O engineers, PRE Labs Kelowna, and IH clinical support. IH Infection Prevention and Control leaders have now endorsed the use of this product for this purpose.

This is a perfect example of the solutions made possible when interdisciplinary, cross-sector partnership is engaged to find solutions for the everyday “mundane and non-thrilling” practice concerns that can make a very real difference in the practice of health care workers. And for nurses who have been looking at their patients through a maddening fog, this minor nuisance does seem to have patient safety implications – and once it is identified as actually relevant, perhaps the evidence will follow that it really does matter!

NNPBC would like thank Sybil Hoiss RN, MN, is Clinical Nurse Specialist, Critical Care Network, Interior Health and Mary Kjørven RN, PhD, GNC(C) is Regional Clinical Nurse Specialist, Geriatrics & Seniors Specialized Care Transformation, Interior Health for their contributions to this document.

