Combining System Dynamics and Agent-Based Models to Study Transmission of Healthcare-Associated Infections in Long-Term Care Facilities

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A. Introduction

- Transmission of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) in long-term care facilities (LTCFs) possesses many distinct characteristics that are not either well understood (1).

- While HAIs are primarily disseminated via contacts between healthcare workers and patients in hospitals, patient-patient and patient-visitor contacts play an important role in spreading HAIs in LTCFs (2). The frequent hospital readmissions of the elderly population living in LTCFs can also lead to the transmission of resistant organisms across settings (3,4).

- A hybrid simulation model that combines the methodological strengths of system dynamics (SD) and agent-based models (ABM) can capture these features of HAI transmission in LTCFs.

B. Objectives of the Model

To investigate the transmission dynamics of HAIs and evaluate the effectiveness of infection prevention and control interventions in Scottish LTCFs taking into account the effects of heterogeneous contacts between individuals as well as patient exchange between the LTCFs and hospitals.

C. Model Structure

The hybrid model contains two modules (Figure 1):

- **The LTCF module (ABM):** ABM offers a microscopic view of individual interactions and their impacts upon the transmission of HAIs within an LTCF.

- **The Hospital module (SD):** SD provides the macroscopic view of the dynamics of HAI transmission a hospital whose patients are transferred to and from the LTCF (Figure 2).

**Hybridization Design:** Interaction

**Module Interface:**

- LTCF → Hospital: Residents are aggregated into compartments according to their status of infection.
- Hospital → LTCF: Hospitalized residents are disaggregated to create a set of individual resident agents that return to LTCF module.

D. Discussion

**Why is the Hospital Module Needed?**

- Any change in the prevalence of HAIs in the hospital and the rates and patterns of patient exchange between the two settings will affect the prevalence of HAIs in its connecting LTCF and vice versa.

- Hospital module assesses the feedback loops of the transmission dynamics of HAIs occurring in the hospital-LTCF system.

**References**


