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What’s In A Name? A “Cluster” Of Hospital Epidemiologists

To the Editor—To paraphrase an African proverb, it takes a village to successfully reduce a healthcare facility’s rate of healthcare-associated infections.¹ Most people are aware of terms used for common groups of animals such as a “pack” of dogs, “school” of fish, “flock” of birds, and “herd” of horses.^{2,3} Less common terms include a “scourge” of mosquitoes, a “parliament” of owls, a “crash” of rhinoceroses, a “dazzle” of zebras, a “murder” of crows, and a “tower” of giraffes.^{2,3} Collective terms for groups of humans have also been used such as a “hastiness” of cooks, a “stalk” of foresters, a “bevy” of ladies, and a “pity” of prisoners.⁴

Because infection prevention is a collective activity, we decided that such groups require specific names. Thus, we

propose the following: a “cluster” of hospital epidemiologists, a “trust” of infection preventionists, a “colony” of microbiologists, an “intellect” of infectious disease specialists, and a “capsule” of pharmacists. Given that a group of nightingales is a “watch” and the importance of Florence Nightingale in the development of the nursing profession, we propose that a group of nurses be termed a “watch.” Alternatively, one could use the term a “devotion” of nurses. Although we should probably not publicize the following group names, we thought the following appropriate: an “irritant” of regulators, a “parsimony” of chief financial officers, a “pestilence” of vaccine deniers, and a “complexity” of EMR programmers.

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