

Surveillance Tip: Standard Deviation Simplified

PIDAC *Best Practices for C. difficile in all Healthcare Settings* version 5, January 2009 states that one definition of an outbreak for *C. difficile* is 2 Standard Deviations (SD) above the mean for a period of 2 months.

Here is an easy way to calculate your health care facility's mean and standard deviation for *C. difficile*. Go to the link: <http://easycalculation.com/statistics/standard-deviation.php>

Enter your *C. difficile* rate for each month for 2009

Hit the calculate button to identify your mean and standard deviation.

Create a graph of your *C. difficile* rates in 2009 using Excel. Include the mean, 1SD, 2SD on the graph. This will provide you with a clear visual representation of trends. See example below.

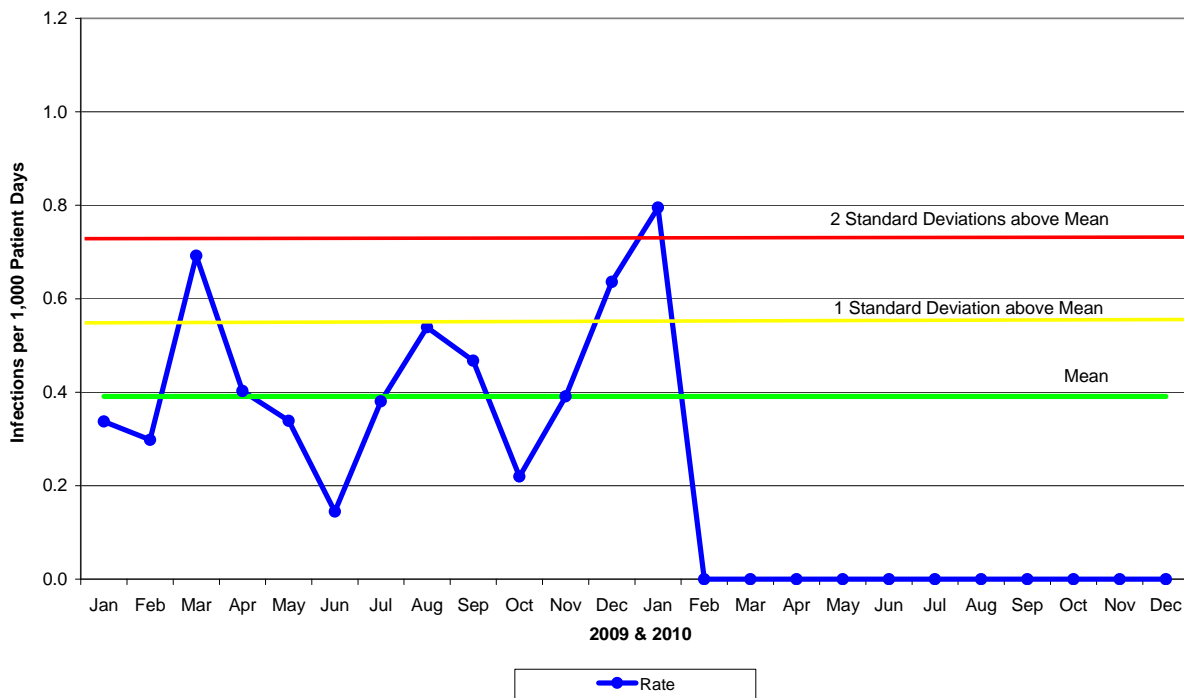
Mean = 0.39

SD = 0.17

1SD = 0.56

2SD = 0.73

C. difficile Hospital Associated Infections



Submitted by May Griffiths-Turner, Chair CSICN Surveillance Subcommittee

Central South Infection Control Network (CSICN)

56 Governor's Road, Lower Level, North Tower, Dundas, ON L9H 5G7 Tel: (905) 627-6475 Fax: (905) 627-6475 Website: www.ricn.on.ca