

PP 28

Knowledge and practices on biomedical waste management among healthcare workers at a tertiary care teaching hospital in Sri Lanka

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Objectives: This study was conducted to describe knowledge and practices on bio medical waste (BMW) management among five categories of health care workers involved in BMW management at a tertiary care teaching hospital in Sri Lanka.

Methods: A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted with an observation checklist and a semi-structured questionnaire that collected data from consented participants. 30 randomly selected wards/labs/sections in the selected hospital and a total of 325 health care workers were assessed from August-November 2012. The study sample comprised 81 doctors, 115 nurses, 22 medical laboratory technologists, 21 attendants and 86 of sanitation staff. SPSS for windows was used for statistical analysis.

Results: A statistically significant difference was observed among the five job categories regarding the knowledge ($p < 0.001$) & practices ($p < 0.001$) on BMW management. Doctors, nurses, medical laboratory technologists, attendants and sanitation staff had mean scores of 58.7, 66.9, 65.1, 78.2, 68.9 respectively on knowledge and mean scores of 62.0, 68.5, 65.7, 77.0 and 76.2 respectively on practices out of a total score of 100. A statistically significant relationship was observed between knowledge and practices ($p < 0.01$) and attendance of training programmes with knowledge ($p < 0.001$) & practices ($p < 0.01$) on BMW management. Deficiencies in facilities for BMW management were also observed.

Conclusions: A wide variation of knowledge and practices on BMW management was observed among the five job categories. A positive relationship was seen between knowledge on BMW management on the correct practices. Lack of facilities was seen as a cause for unsatisfactory practices.

PP 29

Assessment of laboratory safety knowledge among Allied Health Sciences students at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura

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Objectives: To determine the knowledge regarding laboratory safety precautions amongst Allied Health Sciences students at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Methods: Cross-sectional study of Allied Health Sciences students was conducted using a standardized, 60-item structured self-administered questionnaire which enquired about knowledge, attitude and practices regarding laboratory safety precautions. The questionnaires were administered to a batch of 229 students. Descriptive statistics was generated using SPSS 16th version. Students scoring ≥ 75 , 74-60, 50-59 and ≤ 49 were classified as "excellent", "good", "moderate" and "poor" respectively.

Results: Participants included the students from B.Pharm 36.7% (n=84), B.Sc. (Medical Laboratory Sciences/MLS) 45.4% (n=104) and B.Sc. (Nursing) 17.9% (n=41), degree programs. Students' overall knowledge towards the laboratory safety precautions is as follows; excellent 7.4% (n=17), good 27.5% (n=63), moderate 22.7% (n=52) and poor 42.4% (n=97). In general, students had a "good" knowledge in relation to safety laboratory practices, personal protective equipments, traceability and waste disposal. Knowledge regarding gas, chemical storage and glassware hazards was "moderate". But their awareness was "poor" regard to safety equipments, emergency procedures, health awareness, laboratory equipments and instruments. A significant difference ($p < 0.05$) was observed among the degree programs: B.Pharm: excellent 1.2% (n=1), good 10.7% (n=9), moderate 23.8% (n=20), B.Sc (MLS): excellent 15.4% (n=16), good 49% (n=51), moderate 18.3% (n=19) and B.Sc (Nursing); good 7.3% (n=3), moderate 31.7% (n=13). But there was no significant difference observed among the students belonging to different academic years of their Degree program.

Conclusions: The knowledge on laboratory safety precautions amongst Allied Health Sciences students are inadequate.