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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.