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Effective Education on Work Injuries and Needle Safety for Health Workers

Mahdi Ali Saleh Al Zubaidi[1], Rashed Mohmmed Rashed Al Qahtani[2], Dr. Jawaher Ali Mohammad Al-Ghamdi[3], Abdulrahman Abdullah Alshehri[4], Nasser Mohmmed Awadh Alharbi[5], Ali Mohammed Ghorm Al-Shehri[6], Azam Abdulrahem Saad Althqafi[7], Faris Rajeh Mohammeh Rajeh[8], Sultan Ahmed Alloqmani[9]

1. Medical secretary, Najran Prison Health Center
2. Nursing, Al-Rain General Hospital
3. Optometrist and vision sciences specialist, Department of Ophthalmology Center, King Fahd Hospital in Al-Baha
4. Nursing-Eradah complex and Mental Health- jeddah
5. Nursing, Dispensary Altraq Qassem
6. Epidemiology, Tanomah General Hospital
7. Family Medicine Physician, Ministry of Health
8. Epidemiology, Madinah Health Cluster
9. Pharmacist, Madinah Health Cluster

ABSTRACT

Healthcare workers' greatest concern when working with patients generally does not involve their own injuries; there is no time for this thought. However, knowing how to cope with work injuries and needle sticks and completing the correct paperwork afterward are critical. Work injuries and needle sticks are so prevalent in healthcare that there should be education for all levels and types of workers starting with their first jobs and being reinforced with annual in-service education. Preventing back injuries and needle sticks, for example, are pet peeves of safety officers whose jobs are to ensure that healthcare workers are prepared when on duty. Education and training promote excellence in health and safety. That prepared healthcare worker can perform efficiently and effectively. Patients will have a good experience with a well-trained healthcare team, and injuries will be lessened. A marriage of work injuries and needle safety should occur. Moreover, this education should be utilized for didactic content and skills application in laboratory experiences.

KEYWORDS: healthcare, needle injuries, work injuries.

1. Introduction

Healthcare workers' greatest concern when working with patients generally does not involve their own injuries; there is no time for this thought. However, knowing how to cope with work injuries and needle sticks and completing the correct paperwork afterward are critical. Work injuries and needle sticks are so prevalent in healthcare

that there should be education for all levels and types of workers starting with their first jobs and being reinforced with annual in-service education.

Preventing back injuries and needle sticks, for example, are pet peeves of safety officers whose jobs are to ensure that healthcare workers are prepared when on duty. Education and training promote excellence in health and safety. That prepared healthcare worker can perform efficiently and effectively. Patients will have a good experience with a well-trained healthcare team, and injuries will be lessened. A marriage of work injuries and needle safety should occur. Moreover, this education should be utilized for didactic content and skills application in laboratory experiences.

But caring for your neighbor is different when nurses, nursing assistants, doctors, orderlies, housekeepers, physical therapists, reception-desk workers, and more usually do a good job taking care of the sick. The attitude of healthcare workers is evidence that most people go into healthcare to heal people. Healthcare workers must realize that they cannot care for others if they are injured. The patient is not the only one affected by the injury; family is also very concerned about measuring proper procedures in the event of an injury.

1.1. Importance of Education for Health Workers

Health employees' training is increasingly crucial in keeping them safe. Both in the past and currently, health workers use various types of equipment or sharp devices extensively in clinical and non-clinical settings, with needles occupying a prominent position. Injuries sustained while performing various work responsibilities are much decreased when health workers have extended, more comprehensive education. Getting information on safety is of great benefit in avoiding these injuries. Healthcare and its associated risks are dynamic and designed to change. As a result, continuous education will focus on recognizing potential dangers or relevant protective strategies influenced by modifications in work industries, care systems, treatment guidelines, specialist practice, and even regulatory frameworks.

While the physical consequences of work-related injuries can be severe, the psychological and economic consequences can linger long after the injury has healed. The Caring Safely intervention employed in-depth instruction on potential risks, a powerful prevention framework, and a facilitative organizational and societal network that helped health employees "move through" long-standing respectful, "set in stone" and "automatic" routines with a suitable "high alert" state of mind to prevent damaging "unintended slips, lapses, or errors" that should increase their chances of being safe. An environment of security-in-the-face-of-danger orientation - usually referred to as a "safety culture" - has long existed in the health area as a cure to prevent the "fear of the fall" and reduce potential one-step medical errors. As the physical side of education, employees who receive general preparation and are informed about prospective threats and proper spacing procedures may feel happier and more secure in their treatment towards individuals - and are, at the same time, actually the most effective health treatment. Raising consciousness using an information-only lesson did not have this impact. Finally, personnel need to be able to explain to injured people who are concerned about their risks or who are requesting help, pain prescription, or more definitive treatment how the wound

transpired and what the institution is doing to reduce their possibility of contacting infectious diseases. Staff will benefit from a structured framework that uses information contained in well-designed educational packets for a variety of staff groups and does not base a staff's requirement for detailed or essential information on a worker's way of serving. The employer also has a duty to grasp its obligation and the significance of retaining safety standards in deciding priorities and transactions. Enough time in every day would be committed to taking necessary precautions. Such a system, where both parties involved recognize those obligations, is the hallmark of a reliable employer-worker relationship.

2. Understanding Work-Related Injuries

For over a decade, it has been reported that occupational and work-related diseases account for the largest disease burden by a ratio of 2 to 1 when compared to the annual disease burden of communicable diseases. In recent years, researchers have primarily focused attention on needlesticks as a common injury sustained by health workers in the workplace. However, work-related injuries or occupational hazards for health workers are not limited to needlesticks and sharp injuries; they are frequently due to ergonomic factors. The work-related hazard can originate from a variety of sources, including physical factors, ergonomic factors, and environmental factors. Health workers need to recognize the signs and symptoms of the common work-related injuries they face. Common cautionary signs of work-related injuries include musculoskeletal strains, fatigue and stress, and mental health problems. Work-related injuries are not only a large problem for health workers, but they also have implications for the patients who rely on their care. The projected problem for health care systems includes an anticipated loss of over 1.5 million health care professionals' services due to work-related injuries sustained during a specific period. Unsafe patient handling work-related injury claims contributed to nearly $14 million in claims during a specific quarter in California alone. Though the exact number is not known due to underreporting of work-related injuries, $7.4 billion per year is estimated to be spent by U.S. businesses to cover the costs of work-related injuries. The costs of replacing injured skilled employees are projected to be much higher than the costs of treating their injuries. Research across the globe suggests that the number of health workers suffering from musculoskeletal strains is a growing concern. The rate of injuries not only suggests a problem with the current strategies for dealing with the associated risks; it underscores the importance of developing and researching effective educational interventions that can help health workers prevent the related injuries. Educational interventions are the key to reducing the rate of such injuries since they are utilized as a proactive approach. Underreporting of injury rates by health workers continues to be a concern since educational intervention strategies are focused on these groups. The growing number of musculoskeletal strains is just one example of working injuries that indicate a need for educational interventions that change at-risk behaviors for workers on the job. The focus of this initiative is to prevent the development of musculoskeletal strains and injuries that are specifically work-related, as well as injuries due to needlesticks. (Chen et al., 2020)(Abadiga et al.2020)(Abdo et al.2024)

2.1. Common Types of Injuries

Health care system goals are to promote and maintain the health of patients in their care. Exactly the same objectives should apply to the healthcare workers providing care. Yet our studies have shown that health care workers are hurt and become ill at work far more frequently than is generally realized. Our studies are showing that a very high proportion of health care workers, potentially up to 40%, by the time they are middle-aged, have suffered from a work-related physical, psychological, or ergonomic injury. These injuries impact negatively on health, length of service, performance at work, professional and personal life, and the future ability of the health sector to deliver services.

The injuries must ensure that health workers are able to perform for most of the prolonged hours demanded of evenings and weekends with enough energy, enthusiasm, and expertise to ensure that patients receive the highest possible standard of care. The single most common work-induced injury suffered by health workers is a musculoskeletal disorder. In addition, our study shows that health workers, like many others who work in the private and public sectors, suffer predictable but avoidable injuries caused by slips and falls. Additional hazards, however, include the risk of acquiring blood-borne infections due to needle-stick injuries.

3. Needle Safety in Healthcare Settings

Needle safety is a critical issue where injections and drawing blood are routine procedures in healthcare settings. There are many potential hazards and risks associated with the use of needles. Injections are responsible for many healthcare-associated infections among healthcare workers. Disposal of used needles in a way that ensures no harm to people who come into contact with them, whether health workers still at work or engaged in some other occupation, or laypeople, including young children, is essential. Prevention of needle-stick injuries largely focuses on the end-of-life disposal practices of healthcare workers. Nonetheless, there is evidence that used needles are ending up in domestic waste and being handled unsafely and recycled into the community through secondary behavior change, including children cutting themselves. Since contaminated needles are a source of bloodborne pathogen transmission, these situations constitute an unacceptable risk to public health.

There are numerous well-documented accounts of needle-stick injuries among health workers resulting from the disposal of used sharps at the patient's bedside. A recent example is a healthcare worker with two children under the age of five, who found a used needle in the pocket of a pair of hospital-supplied overalls which she took home from work to wash within the first two months of her anesthetic trainee post in a District General Hospital. The origins of the needle could not be traced accurately; however, it was reported that she frequently disposed of needles at the patient's bedside. Later, she developed tuberculosis. Prevention of needle-stick injuries is guided by legislation and best practices that have been established to improve work safety in a particular employment sector. Ongoing education and occupational health checks for healthcare workers who perform procedures where their fingers may

come into contact with the sharp part of the needle are areas that need improvement to prevent needle-stick injuries. Healthcare workers who give injections are frequently responsible for the safe disposal of the used needle in their day-to-day work. They know where the risk areas are in the process and should be supported in reporting all sharps injuries. There is a psychological impact on people working under the constant threat of occupationally acquired bloodborne infections and the possibility of a needle-stick injury. This psychology can potentially influence safe practices. It remains important to keep the amount of training for the prevention of needle-stick injuries in perspective. There are many risk areas in healthcare safety, and an injection is only one example. There are new and emerging risks in the healthcare environment, and work safety extends beyond a step-by-step manual for a single task in healthcare work. Overall improvements in needle safety will require a multi-faceted approach that needs to address suppliers, purchasers, and end-users in the healthcare procurement chain.

3.1. Risks and Hazards Associated with Needles

Risks and hazards of needle use in healthcare settings are typically categorized as exposure to biological hazards and exposure to chemical hazards. Risks from contact with blood and body fluids carry the possibility of exposure to bloodborne pathogens such as the human immunodeficiency virus, hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, and syphilis. These data suggest the magnitude of risk for healthcare workers during the handling of needles.

Practitioners who experience a needle-stick exposure have a variety of reactions, including the fear of occupational infection, experiencing symptoms of physical injury, emotional distress, changes in sexual relations with a partner, symptoms of infectious disease in response to societal stress, family dislocation, effects of substance abuse, and changes in employment. Healthcare workers who experience a needle-stick injury are at increased risk for transmission of biohazard pathogens from injection source patients. They also affect career paths and overall well-being. However, there is a significant level of in-depth understanding of the hazards and risks associated with needle usage. Proper education and continuous application of this awareness will equip workers with an added advantage to prevent associated risks in the healthcare work environment. Moreover, health staff in all organizations should strictly adhere to institutional safety policies and guidelines. Additionally, every organization should create a safe culture to regularly in-service the workers regarding needle stick safety and safe injection practices.

4. Best Practices for Preventing Work Injuries

Healthcare settings are among the more dangerous environments for work injuries. Most workplace prevention programs primarily aim to make the environment safe, with only secondary efforts aimed at training workers in what works, and then only when the workers contribute to the work performed. An upgrade in the approaches taken in healthcare can help reverse these trends. First, there are serious consequences from the types of work injuries that workers in healthcare are at risk for when providing care. Personal protective equipment can help, but will not

eliminate the need to pay attention to safety to control exposure risks associated with work injury for healthcare workers. Second, personal protective equipment must be used, cleaned, checked, and replaced after spills or other workplace injuries or exposures. Since it is unreasonable to work in totally unhealthy environments, prevention of this kind of work injury should emphasize safe habits along with the development of new safety precautions. Since it is not usually patients who place staff at risk of injuries, reinforcing the behavior and training of both workers and management will help attenuate any emergent problems and avoid any collusion demonstrated by healthcare staff toward needed workplace vaccines, prophylaxis, and communicable disease risk reduction efforts.

Preventing work injuries in healthcare settings can only be done by creating a safe environment. However, hospitals can be doubly dangerous for workers because of what is common to everyone in providing traditional care. Hospitals have some of the highest rates of infections attributable to workplace acquired injuries, for instance. Best practices can contribute to reversing risky trends by creating a workplace safe from hazards. Practices involving workers in their data on injury prevention and work risk will develop as 'health worker best practices' evolve. But to have widespread acceptance and real reduction in risks, best practice systems are going to have to develop safe habits, practices, and environmental features specific to healthcare. Things work best when an entity of persons acts as one to have the same single best outcome for all. To be the best healthcare prevention choice, personal-charge behaviors that avoid work risk should be rewarded, which makes the healthcare system unique in its ability to actually motivate safe work environment behaviors. Fact: we learn from mistakes. Opportunities will be missed if workers do not also report injuries to designated staff.

4.1. Proper Body Mechanics and Ergonomics

Not only is it important to recognize principles of movement and body mechanics that can decrease your chance of developing an injury, but it is likewise important to work in an ergonomically safe work setting. An ergonomically safe setting incorporates basic behaviors such as using correct body mechanics and designing atmosphere and equipment in a way that aligns with the operative principles. When both of these behaviors are combined in the workplace, the risk of developing an injury due to a work-related task is reduced.

Workplace injury can be reduced by designing tasks that support the human body to prevent placing the muscles and joints at risk for developing an injury. By incorporating corrective modifications based on the assessment results, the frequency and severity of workplace injuries have been found to decrease significantly. Teaching proper body mechanics to health workers is a basic aspect of preventing work-related injuries. Health workers need to view their bodies as a piece of machinery. There are certain ways to move and carry out a task that can involve lifting, using ladders, reaching, pulling, and bending, which will allow health workers to work without overloading their bodies. Learning about ergonomics and sharing this information with co-workers is important in decreasing the potential for work-related injuries.

When counseling patients, health workers should emphasize positioning techniques

to decrease abnormal forces across the joints. Getting up from a supine position should begin with logrolling onto the side and pushing up with the arms to a sitting position. Getting out of a chair should use the height of the chair to add some leverage to the task. Some agencies have programs integrated into standing activities at the bedsides to guide staff appropriately. Also, incorporating safety techniques to decrease overuse, such as using assistive devices and training patients to assist, is a functional means to protect our backs. To help managers increase the effectiveness of occupational safety and health management programs at the workplace, we recommend the use of resources to deliver technical cooperation and advisory services. Staff education in these practices includes the long-term management of these risks as well as true benefits to the staff's well-being. Work-related injuries and sick days can be lessened by the addition of regular fitness and well-being packages. Staff training that has specific content and goals has shown the most promise in reducing injuries and promoting worker safety.

5. Training Strategies for Health Workers

The need for safety with regard to needle use, work injuries, and the transmission of infections by blood and body fluids has led many medical researchers and practitioners to design effective training strategies for health workers in what is called an occupational setting. The explicit percentage of work injuries and needle sticks among health workers appears to differ in part depending on the specific literature or research reported. Although administrative and educational interventions aimed at reducing some of the hazards workers encounter may not alleviate the associated stigma of the infection or the stress of potential infection itself, staff can make a difference in reducing the number of injuries and take an active role in teaching. Workshops, interactive and hands-on training were found to be the best ways to enhance safety. In addition, simulation offers researchers the ability to standardize the experience while still seeing how things would work in real-world scenarios. A training program in central service processing that utilized simulations of real-life scenarios decreased the incidence of occupational accidents compared to their pre-training levels. Our own experiences with infection control link with worker programs, which include training health care providers who must be prepared for and trained in crises, treatments, medicine, disaster training, and occupational hazards. Our long-term interaction with industrial safety trainers has taught us certain valuable lessons. (Bouya et al.2020)(Che et al.2020)(AlJohani et al.2021)(Abuduxike et al., 2021)

5.1. Interactive Workshops and Simulations

Workshops and simulations are effective for teaching and training adult learners. Workshops help to engage adult learners, build new relationships, and reinforce safety protocols. In a workshop format, participants prefer case presentations, role-playing, and small group activities. Simulations are defined as a representation or emulation of real practice. Unlike workshops, simulations help the participants understand the process and why that process is important. They demonstrate an immediate reaction, as learners see imitation. People often feel safe to experiment within the simulation environment. Simulations can have a broad range of difficulty

levels, from a simple tabletop assignment to a real-life drill finding needles on a patient seen in the hospital.

Training in workshops or with simulations enables the participants to practice real-life situations or scenarios and see the process through to the end. They are effective in teaching a person how to react in a real-life situation, such as taking action to contact the risk management office for advice as soon as they can after exposure, based mostly on information about the source. The role of the educator or the peer assistant is more obvious as feedback is immediate. Approved plans or protocols may be in use, provided in a manual format, with a training protocol during the larger departments' orientation process, or in a separate educational session. Common implementation challenges include changing attitudes among older, more experienced staff, staff correctly applying policies and protocols, allocating a budget for the initiative, a commitment to release staff for training, and making the training mandatory for employees of the healthcare environment. Time is also a barrier to continuing educational sessions, so sessions must be engaging and relevant.

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