



Service Priorities and Programmes
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Surveillance Exercise to Ensure Safe Handling of Sharps

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Introduction

Sharp injuries expose healthcare workers to blood-borne pathogens and induce severe physical and psychological consequences. Sharp injury ranks in the top two on injury-on-duty (IOD) cases, with an average number of sharp injury per 100 staff 0.15 (6.4 cases) per month from Jan to July of 2012 in United Christian Hospital. Through the provision of major safety devices, a series of promotional activities such as road show, demonstration of safety devices, and issuance of highlights for sharing, the injury rate, although showing reducing trend, was still kept at a higher level.

Objectives

To determine approach for ensuring safe handling of sharps To reduce sharp-related injury rate

Methodology

A working group was formed by Department Operation Managers, Ward Managers, frontlines supervisors, Infection control experts and OSH Team. Injury causation analysis was conducted. Non-compliance to safety guidelines and poor safety awareness were the two major reasons. A checklist for safe handling of sharps was considered useful to ensure safe practices. The checklist was developed and endorsed through consultation at OSH Committee and OSH Link Person Meeting. With the support of different stakeholders, a surveillance exercise was conducted from August to October 2012, aiming at covering at least 50% of nurses and supporting colleagues who may need to handle sharps. The pre- and post- incident data, and the coverage in exercise were collected as outcome measures.

Result

Average sharp injury rate were decreased by 47%, from 0.15 to 0.08 per month (6.4 cases to 3.5 cases) after the surveillance exercise. The overall return rate of the exercise was 78% and 95% of departments which had history of sharp injury participated in the exercise. Among the participating departments, the surveillance covered about 85% of nurses and supporting colleagues who may need to handle sharps. Healthy and happy staff ensures sustainable and committed workforce to provide quality care to our clients. With initial improvement in preventing sharps injury,

the surveillance exercise has been agreed as annual exercise in UCH. The checklist has been applying as a tool for the post-injury monitoring and re-education to prevent reoccurrence of similar incidents.