

Knowledge and practice of occupational infections and their prevention among medical interns of a tertiary-care teaching hospital in a south Indian city

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Knowledge and practice of occupational infections and their prevention among medical interns of a tertiary-care teaching hospital in a south Indian city

Arun MV Mohan, Ravish S Koratagere, Riyaz S Basha, Ranganath T Sobagaiah.

Abstract

Background: Medical interns are a vulnerable group with regard to occupational infections (OI) such as HIV and hepatitis B/C, a large proportion of which are preventable by following universal precautions and to some extent by taking postexposure prophylaxis (PEP).

Objective: To assess the knowledge and practices, regarding OIs, universal precautions, and PEP among medical interns.

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional study was performed in August 2011 on medical interns of a tertiary-care teaching hospital using a pretested, semi-structured, and self-administered questionnaire. All interns willing to participate (113 of 127 interns) were included.

Results: More than 97.5% respondents were aware of the possibility of infection via mucocutaneous exposure and needle stick injury (NSI), but less than a third were aware of the recommended first aid for such exposures. Only 54% were aware of the recommended procedure of sharp waste disposal; 36.3% interns reported to have had occupational exposure (OE), majority being NSI and suturing being the main associated activity. Less than a fourth were aware of the ideal time to start PEP for HIV and the location of an emergency PEP dose. Around 65% were aware of the maximum time within which PEP should be started and the course duration of PEP. Only one intern reported to have taken PEP.

Conclusion: One of every three interns had OE. Knowledge and practice of measures necessary to prevent OE and OI was poor. Students must be sensitized frequently during the course and before the start of internship using a powerful teaching–learning tool.

Key words: Occupational infections, occupational exposure, post exposure prophylaxis, universal precautions, standard precautions, needle stick injury

Reference

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