

ABSTRACT

Background Poor biomedical waste handling and segregation has been shown to increase the risk of contracting infections such as HIV, hepatitis B or C among health workers. In this study, the knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding biomedical waste segregation by health care workers at China-Uganda friendship hospital, Naguru was assessed. Data generated from this study may be useful in devising approaches for effective implementation or strengthening of the available guidelines on biomedical waste (BMW) segregation. With effective BMW segregation, the risk of spreading diseases in hospitals will be reduced and the costs that would otherwise be used in segregation of non-segregated waste will be minimized.

Methods

This was a descriptive cross sectional study carried out among 189 health care workers at China-Uganda friendship hospital, Naguru. Data on knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding biomedical waste segregation by health care workers was obtained using questionnaire based interviews and observation. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 20 for quantitative data and content analysis for qualitative data. All descriptive data were presented as frequencies and percentages or as narratives.

Results

In the present study, 79% of the laboratory technicians knew about existence of waste segregation plan in the institution, 93% had knowledge of the color coding for BMW, while 86% were aware about the need for disinfection of BMW before segregation. Ninety one percent (91%) of the doctors could identify the different biohazard symbols and knew that waste should

be segregated into different categories at the source. A majority of the nurses (84%) knew that blue colored puncture proof container is for segregation of waste sharps. In general, multipurpose workers demonstrated least knowledge regarding the different aspects of BMW segregation. Regarding the attitude towards BMW, majority of the multipurpose staff (85%) felt that the segregation of BMW is not an issue at all and it is purely the responsibility of the institution, but not individual responsibility. A good number (76%) felt that the safe segregation of BMW is an extra burden at work, though 50% demonstrated the need to undergo training on segregation of BMW. All doctors felt that Safe segregation of Health Care waste is an extra burden on work. In generally all categories of health workers technicians and multipurpose workers poor practice regarding BMW segregation.

Conclusions and recommendations

Majority of the health workers and laboratory technicians had good knowledge regarding BMW segregation. In order to enhance this knowledge, organization of mandatory refresher courses on BMW segregation by hospital management is commendable. Health care workers should understand that the issue of BMW segregation is not an extra burden at work, but it is the duty of every one of them not only the hospital management. In order to improve the good practice of BMW segregation, training programs should emphasize hands-on training to improve personnel skills on BMW segregation. In addition, hospital management should procure more facilities for storage, collection, treatment and disposal of health care waste, but also increase on the man power at the health facility.