

ABSTRACT

Background: Needle stick and other sharps injuries have been recognized as one of the most common occupational hazards among health care workers. They increase the spread of blood borne pathogens like HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Most research studies focus on Doctors, Nurses and other Health Care Workers (HCW), but at the same time, student nurses in clinical placements are at equally high risk. Despite the advent of safety measures to protect the health care workforce from contracting blood borne diseases, nurses still sustain percutaneous injuries. This study aimed at investigating the prevalence, associated risk factors and measures used to manage needle stick and sharps injuries among student nurses.

Objective: To determine the prevalence, individual and institutional factors predisposing to needle stick and other sharps injuries among nursing students.

Methodology: A comparative cross sectional study was conducted of student nurses in Rakai community and Mayanja memorial schools of nursing, using a structured, pre-tested/validated self-administered questionnaire. The respondents consisted of 378 student nurses. Data was analysed using SPSS version 20.

Findings: A total number of 378 nursing students from Rakai community and Mayanja memorial training institutes were interviewed. The results show that 70.1% were females and 29.9% were male nursing students.

The predisposing factors for needle stick injuries include: year of study ($\chi^2=5.823$, $p= 0.054$), medical instruments ($\chi^2=15.738$, $p= 0.03$), reasons why nursing students did not receive PEP ($\chi^2=20.368$, $p= 0.001$), the presence of written protocol/procedures on disposal of needles/sharps ($\chi^2=13.197$, $p= 0.001$), the number of hepatitis B doses received ($\chi^2=8.018$, $p= 0.046$), availability of PEP protocols in the practice setting ($\chi^2=5.886$, $p= 0.053$) and training of students in the management of PEP ($\chi^2=5.040$, $p= 0.025$).

Conclusion: The occurrence of needle stick and sharps injuries among student nurses was found to be quite common.

Keywords: needle stick and sharps injuries, nursing students