

Background to the study: Unsafe disposal of health-care waste poses public health risks. WHO (2004) estimated that 2000 contaminated injection syringes caused 21 million hepatitis B infections and the latest 260,000 HIV infections (5% of all new infection). According to NEMA (2012), Uganda still has a big problem as regards to BMWM, which is very detrimental to the environment. There have been national efforts with support from, USAID's Strengthening Decentralization for Sustainability (SDS) Programme to improve BMWM in Uganda. However, there is still lack of information on what influences the management of laboratory BMW in the districts of Teso region.

Objective of the study: To assess factors affecting BMWM among laboratory health workers in health facility laboratories in Eastern Uganda in the districts of Kumi, Soroti, Serere, Amuria, Ngora and Bukedea.

Methodology: A cross-sectional descriptive study design was used. The target populations were laboratory health workers in Eastern Ugandan districts of Kumi, Soroti, Serere, Amuria, Ngora and Bukedea. The data was collected through use of researcher administered questionnaires, observations and key informants interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software version 16 while qualitative data were manually summarized. Graphs, charts and tables were used in the presentation of results.

Key findings: Out of the 160 laboratory health workers interviewed, only 58.1% were able to correctly define BMWM. The study found a statistically significant relationship between biomedical waste management and individual factors of age ($P= 0.001$), sex ($P= 0.044$) and duration in service ($P= 0.000$). Only 36.2% of the respondents were able to correctly identify methods of managing biomedical waste. Up to 78.8% had never had any training in biomedical waste management, yet a majority (95.6%) of them were willing to take up training opportunity on BMWM. Further, 87.5% of those who correctly identified methods of biomedical waste management also had protective gadgets. Having protective gadgets was the single most important institutional factor influencing biomedical waste management ($X^2 =9.659, P=0.002$).

Conclusions and Recommendations: The laboratory health worker's age, sex, duration of service and time (years) spent at the current health facility had a significant influence on their biomedical waste management practices. Knowing the definition of BMWM and the correct identification of BMW in the laboratory by the laboratory health workers were additional significant influencers of their BMWM practices. The agreeing that BMWM was important, lack of training in BMWM and having protective gadgets were also significant influencers of BMWM by the laboratory workers in this region.

There is therefore, need to invest on training of laboratory health workers to improve their level of knowledge on BMWM, motivate the staff to stay longer at their places of work and to have continuous supply of protective gadgets.