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Occupational exposures to blood and body fluids (BBF): Assessment of knowledge, attitude and practice among health care workers in general hospitals in Lebanon

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ABSTRACT

Healthcare workers (HCWs) who are employed in traditional health care workplaces face a serious danger that may threaten their life; it is their exposure to blood and body fluids (BBF). In Lebanon, the introduction of a hospital accreditation system has put a particular emphasis on staff safety, and on the evaluation of professional practice (EPP) programs. Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted amongst 277 HCWs working in 4 general hospitals in South Lebanon. Objective: 1) describe the prevalence and the risk factors for occupational exposure to BBF among HCWs; 2) evaluate knowledge, attitude, and practices of HCW concerning blood-borne pathogens and adherence to universal safety precautions. Results: The mean age of the respondents was 32.14 years (SD = 10.33), 57.4% were females. 43.3% of HCWs expressed that they use gloves all the time for every activity of care. 67.1% were aware that needles should not be recapped after use; registered nurses and nursing students were more aware than physicians and nursing assistants (nurse) in this subject. 30% of HCWs declared having had at least one occupational exposure to BBF; 62.7% of all accidental exposure was reported to the department responsible for managing exposures. Percutaneous injuries were the most frequently reported. Vaccination coverage was 88.4% for hepatitis B, and 48.4% against influenza. The source patient was tested in 43.4% of reported BBF exposures. Accidental exposure to BBF was more frequent in older people (OR = 3.42; p = 0.03) and the more experienced. Subjects working in intensive care unit ward reported more exposure to BBF (OR = 3; p = 0.04). Participants incurring exposure to BBF resorted to different measures after the injury suggesting a lack of a uniform policy for post-exposure prophylaxis. Conclusion: Exposure to BBF represents an important and frequently preventable occupational hazard for HCWs in Lebanon that requires continuous EPP of HCWs, and a comprehensive approach for prevention and management.

KEYWORDS

Occupational exposure to blood and body fluids; Evaluation of the Professional Practice; Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices (KAP); Controlled Language; Healthcare Workers

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