Bio-Medical Waste Management: A Study to Assess the Knowledge of Nursing Personnel

Usha Prabhakar and Neelam Makhija

Ever since the notification of Bio-Medical Waste (Management & Handling) rules by the Ministry of Environment & Forest in 1998, Indian hospitals & health care institutions are obliged to implement these and manage medical waste as prescribed. The hospital waste management issue has arrived on horizon with a bang. Medical waste management has now become a major pre-occupation of hospital health establishment & institutions. Because of growing number of cases coming to hospitals infected with Hepatitis B & C & HIV, the medical waste management is now all the more in lime light.

Bio Medical Waste (BMW) means any waste, which is generated during diagnosis treatment or immunization of human being or animal or in research activities pertaining thereto or in the production or testing of biological. Poor segregation practices result in much larger quantities of medical waste generation and also create risk to health & safety of physicians, nurses, patients & visitors.

The onus of disposal is at generator site & nurses are highly responsible for BMW management. They play a leading role in managing & supervising hospital waste. Thus, it was the need felt by investigators to assess the knowledge of nursing personnel in this regard. Following independent study was taken by investigators.

“A study to assess the knowledge of nursing personnel regarding BIO-MEDICAL WASTE Management working at one of the large hospital” at Delhi

Objectives of Study were to:

1. Assess the knowledge of nursing personnel regarding BMW management in the areas of:
   a) Generation of BMW
   b) Categorizing & Segregation of BMW
   c) Transportation of MBW
   d) Treatment & final disposal of BMW

2. To provide the feedback to ongoing educational program on BMW management.

Methodology

A survey approach was used to assess the knowledge of nursing personnel regarding BMW management working in different units of one of the biggest hospital which has medical & nursing Institute attached to it. Samples of 30 nursing personnel were randomly selected.

A structured questionnaire was developed for the collection of data. Validity & reliability of tool was checked. Questionnaire contained a total of 39 questions regarding generation, categorizing and segregation, transportation, treatment and final disposal of BMW, universal precautions followed by nurses. Their views regarding In Service Education Program on BMW management.

Major Findings

1. Total no. of subjects selected for study were 30. Out of this, ANS (14%); sister incharge (10%); staff nurse (76%). Their year of experience: those above 5 years (94%); below 5 years (6%).

Implications

1. It is desirable that while providing quality health care, health care personnel also take appropriate measures to protect human & environment from BMW & hazardous material generated in their institutions. Each & every health care employee should understand the definition of waste & take due care in segregating the medical waste at source.

The authors are working at GTB Hospital, Delhi.