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Project title

A Proactively Approach to reduce sharps injuries: Promoting 3V Safe Sharps Behavior for Operating Theatre

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Introduction

Nurses and technical assistants working in operating theatre are always at high risk for exposure to bloodborne pathogens from sharps injuries, especially scrub personnel (62%), followed by chief surgeons (14%) and anaesthesiologists (14%) who manage sharps injuries frequently in the operating theatre. From 2013 to 2014, 13 cases related to sharps injuries were reported, of which an average number of sharps injury was 0.5 per month. Most of these injuries were related to unsafe sharps practice that can be prevented. Therefore, it is necessary to create a safe culture in department.

Objectives

(1) To reduce the rate of sharps injuries by at least 50%; and (2) to enhance staff's awareness and promote safety culture by changing unsafe work behaviour.

Methodology

A "Plan-Do-Check-Act" (PDCA) cycle was used to implement change. (1) Plan - establish a work group to identify risk factors for implementation of strategies; create posters and evidence-based slogans to increase encouragement. (2) Do – develop in-service training sessions on safe handling of sharps to enhance staff's skills and to arouse their awareness on safe culture; launch "3V Safe Sharps Plan" (Verification of Neutral Zone, Visual Contact and Verbal Notification) strategies to integrate safer habit into daily practice. (3) Check - nominate operating room in-charge to monitor sharps handling by scrub persons; perform an observational hazards assessment by formulating a checklist to ensure safe work process and compliance; conduct spot checks for improvement; evaluate the programme with a survey and monitoring statistics on Injury on Duty (IOD). (4) Act – review the process and take appropriate actions for future improvement.

Result

The compliance rate of safety practice is 97.5%. 71 (95%) of 75 nursing staff and technical assistants participated in the satisfaction survey. Over 90% of staff agreed that the programme was effective to reduce sharps injuries. Until December 2015, sharps injury rate was remarkably reduced by 66% compared to that of last year.

Conclusion

The programme is successful in reducing incidents of sharps injuries. It encourages staff to follow safe practice and raise safety awareness on sharps handling through "3V" safety practice. Safety culture is effectively built up and promulgated. In order to sustain the practice, monitoring and surveillance would be continued.