



The Royal College of Nursing said simple shielded needles could stop most accidents and protect nurses from infections such as HIV and hepatitis. But the poll of nearly 2,000 nurses in the UK suggests that nearly half do not have access to safer needle devices.

The RCN write “The RCN has called on the Government and employers in the NHS to introduce needle policies and invest in safer alternatives to traditional needles to prevent needlestick injuries occurring. The Colleges comments follow the publication of an RCN report which found that nearly half of all nurses (48%) have been injured by a needle that had previously been used on a patient.

The report, entitled Needlestick Injury in 2008 highlighted the danger which nurses faced whilst carrying out their work, despite the fact that the majority of employer had a needlestick policy in place:

34% of respondents felt at risk of contracting diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C following injuries.

In 90% of cases, the injury drew blood.

28% of respondents did not receive any employer advice about the risk of blood-borne diseases after reporting an incident to their employer.

Only 55% received any form of training from their employer on safer needle use.

Dr Peter Carter, Chief Executive and General Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing said:

“Government and employers in the NHS need to start taking this issue seriously by

introducing needle policies and investing in safer alternatives to traditional needles, so that these accidents don't happen in the first place. Nurses should also receive full support from their employers when they sustain an injury because no one wants to feel isolated and alone when going through such trauma.

4,407 nurses responded to the RCN Needlestick Injury in 2008 survey published in the RCN's fortnightly Bulletin magazine and a further 320 nurses completed an online survey. The RCN says it is now looking forward to working with the Government, regulators and employers to address the issue. The report was launched to MPs, peers and stakeholders at the House of Commons yesterday (18 November 2008).

[Read the RCN needlestick injury 2008 report.](#)

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