



Intravenous literature: Aziz, A.M., Ashton, H., Pagett, A., Mathieson, K., Jones, S. and Mullin, B. (2009) Sharps management in hospital: an audit of equipment, practice and awareness. *British Journal of Nursing*. 18(2), p.92-98.

Abstract:

The safe handling and disposal of needles and other sharp instruments forms part of an overall strategy to protect staff, patients and visitors from exposure to blood-borne pathogens. As with many infection prevention and control policies, the assessment and management of the risks associated with the use of sharps is paramount, and safe systems of work and engineering controls must be in place to minimize any identified risks. The use of sharps in hospitals should be avoided where possible; when their use is essential, particular care is required in handling and disposal – if possible, use safer sharps devices. An audit of sharps management was undertaken to observe equipment, practice and awareness. The audit reported very positive results. However, some areas needed further review to improve practice. The infection control team implemented an action plan as a result of the audit and set about initiating measures for training and awareness. It is necessary to audit sharps management routinely to have an accurate assessment of current practice and prevent occupational exposure to blood-borne pathogens.

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