

Hepatitis B Vaccination after Occupational Exposure among Healthcare Workers in a Tertiary Hospital in Delhi

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Abstract

Introduction: Hepatitis B virus (HBV) is a bloodborne virus which can be transmitted via percutaneous and mucocutaneous exposure to infected body fluid. Healthcare workers (HCWs) who are continuously exposed to different body fluids are at an increased risk of contracting and transmitting this virus. It is thus important to evaluate and highlight: Knowledge of post-exposure management strategies and first aid following exposure to blood and bodily fluids, Prevalence of Hepatitis B infection among HCWs, Hepatitis B vaccination rates and post-exposure prophylaxis, Post-vaccine immune status of HCWs.

Material and Methods: An Observational, Individual Based, Cross-sectional Survey was carried out in a tertiary care teaching hospital in India. Stratified Sampling technique was utilized to select participants.

Results: Only 59% of the respondents got their Hepatitis B titres measured after 2 months of vaccination. 41% did not get their anti-Hbs titres measured post-immunisation. Alarming, 23% did not even know that anti-Hbs titres are to be measured. It was disturbing to note that 21% still capped needles with both hands and were unaware about safe capping techniques like One-Hand Scoop Technique. On being asked first aid measures to be administered to contaminated percutaneous needle/sharp injury, 25% wrongly advised that the site will be washed with alcohol. 3.9% even disclosed that they have poured sodium hypochlorite on sites where they have been pricked with a contaminated needle. Perhaps the most shocking revelation that highlighted the dire need for postexposure first-aid came when respondents agreed that mouth splashed with blood/bodily fluids should be rinsed with soapy water (11.8%) repeatedly, rinsed with alcohol based disinfectant (13.2%).

Conclusion: Majority of the study respondents did not demonstrate a satisfactory level of awareness and attitude regarding Hepatitis B transmission and prevention. 89.5% doctors stated that they did not undergo post-exposure prophylaxis in the form of Hepatitis B Vaccination.