

Situational analysis of healthcare waste management system in the hospitals of Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Despite the high disease burden associated with poor healthcare waste management in developing countries, little is known about the current practices of healthcare waste management system in hospitals of Sub-Saharan Africa where Ethiopia is the case in point. The aim of this study was to examine the current practices in view of developing a standard healthcare waste management intervention strategy in the hospitals of Ethiopia.

Methods: A cross sectional study was conducted in 10 randomly selected hospitals from December 2014 to May 2015. Data on the practice of healthcare waste management system was collected using semi-structured questionnaire and observational checklist.

Results: The practice of healthcare waste segregation was found to be very limited in all hospitals. There was no structured collection, transportation, and treatment system for general and hazardous waste in both private and public hospitals. All public hospitals used open pits located in their back yard for the final disposal of their untreated healthcare waste in addition to incineration in open pits and controlled incinerators. The private hospitals mixed their untreated healthcare waste with the municipal squander. Only public hospitals had rarely organized irregular training related to infection prevention and healthcare waste management.

Conclusion: Overall, the healthcare waste management systems in study hospitals were found to be haphazard and ineffective to tackle environmental contamination and public health risks. Therefore, there is an urgent need to establish environmentally sound healthcare waste management system at all healthcare facilities.

Keywords: Healthcare Waste; Segregation; Hospital; management system; Ethiopia