Abstract

Descriptive study was carried out to characterize the occupational accidents involving potentially contaminated material among workers of hospital supporting services. The study reviewed records of workers involved in these accidents and attended at a specialized outpatient clinic of a large tertiary care hospital between January 1997 and October 2001. A total of 2814 workers from different professional categories were attended during this period. Of these, 147 (5.2%) belonged to the hospital supporting services and were the victims of 156 accidents, auxiliary cleaning personnel (80.2%), and over a third of the workers had not received any dose of hepatitis B vaccine (35.4%). Most accidents were due to sharp injuries (96.8%) caused by inadequately discarded hollow needles. Chemoprophylaxis for HIV was not indicated in only 23.1% of cases. We conclude that these workers are also exposed to the possibility of acquiring blood-borne pathogens and that periodical education programs are needed.

Keywords

Accidents, occupational, blood-borne pathogens, support services, hospital.