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The Iceberg model of needlestick injuries and blood exposure reporting among the medical students

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Background & Aim: The Needlestick and Sharps Injuries (NSSIs) including blood or body secretion exposure are still the universal occupational hazard not only the health care workers but also the medical students who are underdeveloped practical skills. These injuries take them at risk of blood-borne infections, for example, HBV, HCV and HIV. However, not all injuries are reported which is leading to an underestimation of the actual prevalence. It is very important one of the student safety points that we, the medical teachers, need to pay attention to the reporting of these injuries because the underreporting represents a missed opportunity for post-exposure prophylaxis and cause of injuries identification. The aim of this study was to explore the incidence of reporting and underreporting of NSSIs and blood or body secretion exposure among the medical students.

Method: 180 clinical medical students in the academic year 2017 were surveyed using questionnaires to determine history of NSSIs and blood or body secretion exposure during the preceding 12 months and the number of reporting to hospital infection control services after injuries occurred.

Result: 98 questionnaires were returned (54.4%). There were 31.6% had NSSIs and 37.8% had blood or body secretion exposure in previous year. There were 45.1% of NSSIs had reported after injuries while 54.8% had not reported and only 29.7% had reported after exposure to blood or body secretion while 70.3% had not reported.

Conclusion: Underreporting rate of NSSIs and blood or body secretion exposure is greatly higher than reporting among the medical students. Teaching them the universal precautions is not enough for these injuries prevention. We have to encourage our medical students to report when these injuries occurred in order to we do root cause analysis of these adverse events to find out the actual cause and prevention.

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