

Correctional Healthcare Workers

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It is a widely acknowledged that workers in healthcare may be exposed to risks and threats that could endanger their well-being. The risks stemming from bloodborne pathogens can lead to diseases such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus or more commonly HIV. But these are not the only dangers that workers in healthcare face. Other significant risks are of a varying nature. Hospitals or treatment facilities are not the only places where workers face risks. Those who work in jails and prison are open to risk in the form of unpredictable work settings. Security issues can also pose threat to the well-being of the workers than infection or other medicinal diseases. Another source of threat are the inmates or prisoners that the center houses. These prisoners could carry bloodborne diseases. It has been seen that in some cases, health workers in prisons can be stabbed and/or bitten in an incident of assault by one the inmates. Inmates have often resorted to using needles to hurt the personnel. It is from those contaminated needles that the biggest threats arise. The other source could be the use of blood to threatened or hurt workers. In such incidents, workers become more prone to picking up bloodborne diseases.

A research was conducted by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health in order to determine the causes and effects of such incidents. As part of assistance, several other organizations provided valuable insight into the study and the methods and practices they implement in order to prevention their workers from the hazards of such environments. From this research, NIOSH was able to gather information on the subject and come up with recommendations as to what the organization and the workers in correctional facilities do to remain safe.

As an institution, it is the responsibility of the management to ensure adequate steps have been taken for the safety and health of the workers. From the recommendations NIOSH put forward, the management must ensure that workers are using work practices that are in compliance with the standards devised. By following the set patterns and practices, the chances of risk can be significantly reduced among the workers. In some organizations, it is necessary to vaccinate workers from the potential diseases that they could catch. Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulates these practices as an attempt to make the workplace safer for workers. In other institutions, employees are required to wear protective equipment such as face masks, aprons, gloves, gowns and goggles.

The use of needleless medical systems can also help lower the risk of bloodborne diseases. OSHA mandates the institutions and organizations to follow such systems for workers that do not engage in managerial tasks at the facility or are involved in direct care of the patient or inmates. For the needleless system, workers must be provided adequate training before implementation so as to provide workers with the necessary skills and expertise required to operate in the new environment. In some cases, sanitization is also required for the employees before and after work (Skinner, 2010).

It is true that workers in correctional centers such as prisons and jails are open to risks from the environment they operate in. As a measure to secure their well-being, institutions and facilities must ensure that standard policies and procedures are in place and are being used by all personnel in the organization.

References

Skinner, R. (2010). GIS in hospital and healthcare emergency management. Boca Raton, FL:
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