SELF ASSESSMENT OF BEHAVIOR IN INFECTIONS WASTE MANAGEMENT BY HEALTH CARE WORKERS OF NATIONAL REFERRAL HOSPITAL, THIMPHU, BHUTAN

Ugen Dophu

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Public Health in Health Systems Development
College of Public Health
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2004
ISBN 974-9599-57-8
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I21801393

Thesis Title : Self Assessment of Behavior in Infections Waste Management by Health Care Workers of National Referral Hospital, Thimphu, Bhutan

By : Ugen Dophu

Program : Health Systems Development

Thesis Advisor : Associate Professor Ong-arj Viputsiri, M.D., Dr.P.H.

Thesis Co-advisor : Assistant Professor Somrat Lertmaharit, M. Med. Stat.

Accepted by the College of Public Health, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok Thailand in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree

..... Dean of the College of Public Health

(Professor Chitr Sitthi-Amorn, M.D., M.Sc., Ph.D.)

THESIS COMMITTEE

..... Chairman

(Professor Surasack Taneepanichskul, DTPM.)

..... Thesis Advisor

(Associate Professor Ong-arj Viputsiri, M.D., Dr.P.H.)

..... Co-Advisor

(Assistant Professor Somrat Lertmaharit, M. Med. Stat.)

..... Member

(Associate Professor Sathirakorn Pongpanich, M.A., Ph.D.)

PH : 032414 : MAJOR HEALTH SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
KEY WORD : INFECTIOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT / HEALTH WORKERS / PROFESSIONALS / AUXILIARY STAFF / NATIONAL REFERRAL HOSPITAL

UGEN DOPHU: SELF ASSESSMENT OF BEHAVIOR IN INFECTIONS WASTE MANAGEMENT BY HEALTH CARE WORKERS OF NATIONAL REFERRAL HOSPITAL, THIMPHU, BHUTAN. THESIS ADVISOR: ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ONG-ARJ VIPUTSIRI, M.D., Dr. P.H. THESIS CO-ADVISOR: ASSISTANT PROFESSOR SOMRAT LERTMAHARIT, M. Med. Stat. 87 pp. ISBN 974-9599-57-8

Inadequate and inappropriate handling of infectious wastes could result in serious public health consequences and significant negative impact on human and the environment. The study on behavior and related factors among health care workers in proper management of infectious waste at national referral hospital Thimphu, Bhutan was conducted from 5th to 10th May 2004. This is a cross-sectional descriptive study. A total of 283 health workers participated in the study. Self-administered questionnaire was used to obtain information from 36 doctors, 112 nurses and 80 technicians. The information from 55 auxiliary staff was obtained by two trained interviewers through structured questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were coded, entered and analyzed by SPSS.

The mean scores of knowledge were 8.42, 9.21, 9.69, and 9.94 for auxiliary, technicians, nurses and doctors respectively from total of 10 scores. The mean scores of attitude were 41.82, 41.93, 43.42 and 44.91 while the mean scores of behavior were 44.48, 42.11, 42.10 and 43.35, from total of 50 scores, for auxiliary, technicians, nurses and doctors respectively. Socio-demographic factors like age, gender, level of education, job category, waste management training and duration in service were not significantly associated with behavior. The mean scores of knowledge and attitude of professionals were significantly higher than auxiliary staff ($p < .001$). The mean of behavior scoring by auxiliary staff was slightly higher than by professionals, however, there was no statistically significant difference ($p = .350$). Regarding policy content, manual on infectious waste management has been top ranked by all health workers. Deployment of policy, availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other equipment had been ranked top two.

It is strongly suggested that the national referral hospital Thimphu should have a policy commitment and strategic plan for effective continuous quality improvement on the infections waste risk management of the hospital.

Student's signature .....

Field of study Health Systems Development Advisor's signature .....

Academic year 2004 Co-advisor's signature .....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the college of public health and the Ajarns for giving me the opportunity to attend this course and successfully sail through this tough course in one year time. The knowledge gained has been enormous and I feel it would help me in my future.

I would like to express my immense thanks and gratitude to Associate prof. Ong-arj Viputsiri and Assist. Prof. Somrat Lertmaharit for their valuable advice and encouragement that was given to me during the whole process of this thesis.

I also acknowledge with much appreciation the advice and encouragement from Prof. Surasak Taneepanichskul and Assoc. Prof. Sathirakorn Pongpanich during process of this thesis writing.

I am indebted to and offer my thanks to Ajarn Robert S. Chapman for teaching me the data analysis and for imparting me his knowledge on various occasions.

The kind co-operation and generous assistance received from the administrative staff of the college is highly appreciated.

The help that I got from Sunanta in the college library made my life much easier. Lastly, I would like to thank the Royal Government of Bhutan for giving me the opportunity to attend this course and for sponsoring me during the course.

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