

Esposizione occupazionale a rischio biologico nel Dipartimento di Scienze Odontostomatologiche: risultati di uno studio di sorveglianza di 10 anni

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KEY WORDS

Dental School; body fluids; health surveillance

SUMMARY

«Occupational exposure to blood and body fluids in a Department of Odontostomatologic Sciences: results of a ten-year surveillance study». **Background:** Evaluation of occupational exposures can assist with practice modifications, redesign of equipment, and targeted educational efforts. **Objectives:** The aim of this analysis was to identify trends that will aid in the prediction and prevention of accidents. **Methods:** Our data were collected from 1999 to 2008 during a surveillance programme of occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials in a middle Dental School by using a standard coded protocol. **Results:** Altogether 51 exposures were reported. Of these, 45/51 (88 %) were percutaneous and 6/51 (12%) were of the mucosa, involving a splash in the eye of dental care workers (DCW). Of these 22/51 (43%) occurred among dental students, 17/51 (33%) among DCWs attending master and doctorate courses, 11/51 (22%) among DCWs attending as tutors and visiting professors and 1/51 (2%) among staff. Regarding the circumstances of the exposures, 37/51 (73%) and 14/51 (27%) of the accidents occurred respectively during and after the use of a device; of latter, 1/14 (7%) was connected with instrument cleaning and with laboratory activity, 10/14 (71%) occurred when a DCW collided with a sharp object, and 2/14 (4%) happened during other activities. The instrument and the body part most likely to be involved were needles and fingers. The overall exposure rate was 5.15 ± 0.72 standard error per 10,000 patient procedures. **Conclusions:** Our results may serve as a benchmark that other Dental Schools could adopt to assess accident frequency.