

Healthcare waste management in Sri Lankan Ayurvedic Hospitals

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Abstract

Healthcare waste has become a global issue due to its complicated impact on human health as well as the environment. It includes both general and hazardous waste where the latter contributes to only 10-25% of total healthcare waste. Though it seems to be in small quantity, it may lead to serious health hazards if not properly disposed. If it is not disposed according to the recommended method or not properly managed, there is a great risk of contaminating the general healthcare waste or municipal waste stream, causing numerous health hazards to the public, environment and also the patients and healthcare workers. The present project was done in order to study about the waste disposal patterns in Ayurvedic Hospitals in Sri Lanka. 34 Ayurvedic hospitals islandwide including Ayurveda teaching Hospitals, Reaserach Institutes, Provincial Hospitals, Base Hospitals and Rural Hospitals were included in the study. Data was collected through a questionnaire consisted of 48 questions related to the waste disposal. The study revealed that there is a strong relationship between knowledge, training and waste disposal pattern. A moderate relationship was observed between the type of waste and the waste disposal pattern. But the relationship between the amount of waste and the disposal pattern was weak. It was also noted that the Hospitals do not follow the WHO guidelines of Healthcare Waste Management. Most institutions had separated the total waste amount in to 2 categories namely, recyclable waste and organic waste and both contents are being handed over to the municipal waste collectors. Very few seemd to be concered about hazardous waste and there should be an integrated healthcare waste management system with constantly upgrading knowledge on HCWM. It is also wished to suggest a National policy for integrated healthcare waste management system with the participation of Ayurvedic healthcare sector.

Keywords: Healthcare waste, hazardous waste, disposal methods