From Panic to Policy: Evaluating Sharps Injury Knowledge of Perioperative Staff

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Background

- Sharps injuries recognized as a common injury for perioperative nurses[1]
- Sharps injuries underreported by various clinicians, regardless if employed or training[2]
- Common underreporting reasons[3]:
  1. perceive low infection risk
  2. fear of looking incompetent to peers
  3. believe reporting is inconsequential or unbeneficial

In 2024, learning opportunities identified by perioperative staff on procedures to prevent and respond to sharps injuries

Purpose

Initiative was created to educate and raise awareness for sharps injuries prevention and exposure response

Method

- Educational in-service held to review poster (Fig 1)
- Poster displayed at high-traffic areas:
  - every scrub sink near operating rooms
  - staff bulletin board
- Online assessment tool created to assess staff confidence levels pre-and post education from scale 0 - 10 (Fig 2)
- Assessment tool distributed through quick-response barcodes and email after education session
- Reviewed self-reported sharps injuries raw data (Fig 3)
- Survey data compared to sharps data over 7 month period pre- and 7 month period post- education (Fig 4)
- All staff encouraged to participate in education and survey

Results

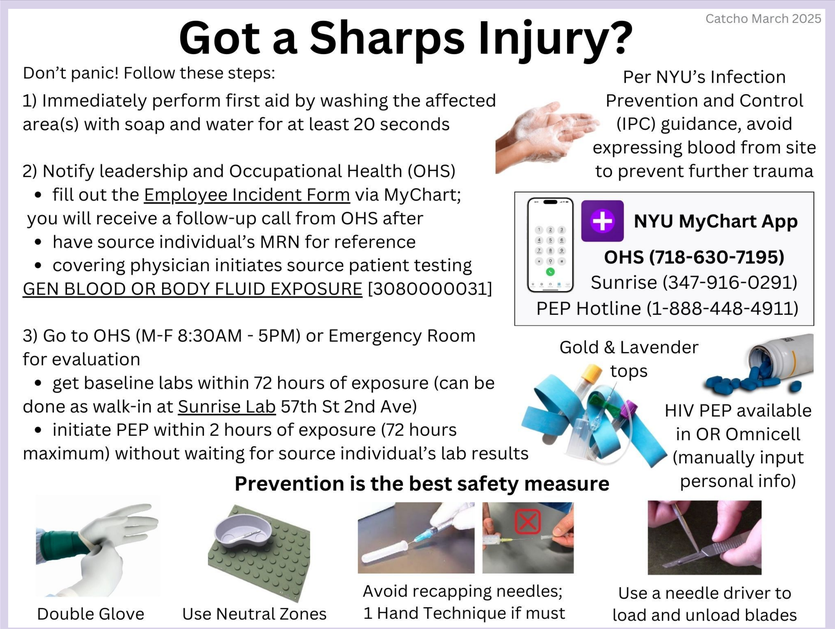

Figure 1: Sharps Injury Educational Poster

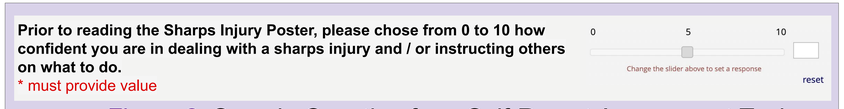

Figure 2: Sample Question from Self-Report Assessment Tool

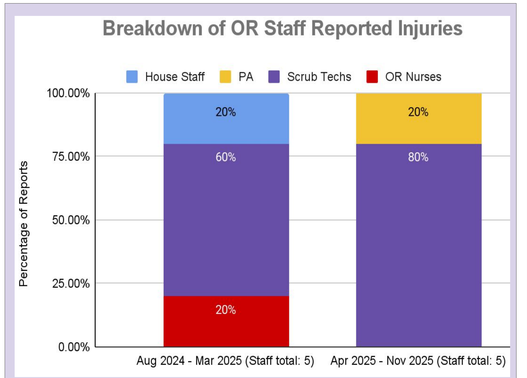

Figure 3: Facility Data Aug 2024 - Nov 2025

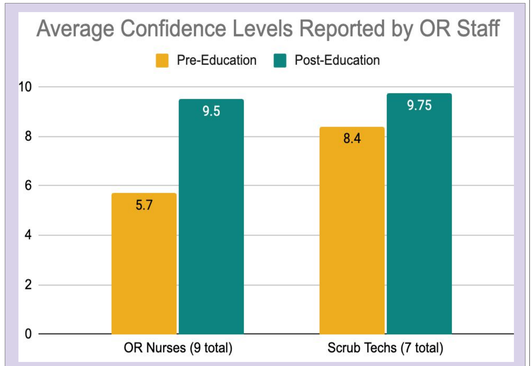

Figure 4: Staff Self-Reported Survey Results

Discussion

Majority of staff who responded had increased confidence after education.

Staff with reported prior sharps injuries are more likely to report no change in confidence levels post-education.

Strengths:

- Project increases confidence in reporting sharps injuries while advocating for staff safety
- Project adaptable to any facility or specialty where sharps injuries possible
- Information can be updated to include new guidelines and interventions

Limitations:

- In-house non-validated knowledge assessment tool
- Small sample size limits ability to generalize results
- One educational session was held
- Majority of respondents had prior sharps injuries
- Breakdown numbers based on self-reports made

Conclusion

- Results suggest education increases perioperative staff's understanding of sharps injury prevention and actions to take
  - Education empowers and gives staff confidence preventing and handling sharps injury incidents
- Future work can focus on increasing sample size and expand to other units or facilities

References

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3. Yun, J., Umemoto, K., Wang, W., & Vyas, D. (2023, April 5). National Survey of Sharps injuries incidence amongst healthcare workers in the United States. International journal of general medicine. http://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10083018/

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Nothing to disclose