



Exposure Prevention Information Network

1997 U.S. EPINet Needlestick and Sharp-Object Injury Report

International Healthcare Worker Safety Center, University of Virginia

Total hospitals contributing data = 55

Total cases: 3,005 (excluding injuries occurring before use)

Total average daily census: 10,087

JOB CATEGORY		
M.D. (attending/staff)	171	6%
M.D. (intern/resident/fellow)	270	9%
Medical student	30	1%
Nurse RN/LPN	1334	44%
Nursing student	25	1%
Respiratory therapist	43	1%
Surgery attendant	152	5%
Other attendant	138	5%
Phlebotomist/venipuncture/I.V. team	148	5%
Clinical laboratory worker	95	3%
Technologist (non-lab)	126	4%
Dentist	7	0%
Dental hygienist	5	0%
Housekeeper/laundry worker	136	5%
Paramedic	3	0%
Other student	30	1%
Other	285	9%
(7 missing)		

PLACE OF OCCURRENCE		
<i>Where did the injury occur in the institution?</i>		
Patient room	1016	34%
Outside patient room	66	2%
Emergency department	265	9%
Intensive/critical care unit	211	7%

Operating room	715	24%
Outpatient clinic/office	186	6%
Blood bank	7	0%
Venipuncture	17	1%
Dialysis facility	18	1%
Procedure room	119	4%
Clinical laboratories	61	2%
Autopsy/pathology	25	1%
Service/utility area	63	2%
Labor and delivery	17	1%
Home	42	1%
Other	174	6%
(3 missing)		

SOURCE PATIENT		
<i>Was the source patient known?</i>		
Yes	2654	88%
No	232	8%
Unknown	92	3%
N/A	22	1%
(0 missing)		

ORIGINAL USER		
<i>Was the injured worker the original user of the sharp item?</i>		
Yes	1791	60%
No	989	33%
Unknown	34	1%
N/A	87	3%
(102 missing)		

CONTAMINATION		
<i>Was the sharp item:</i>		
Contaminated	2634	88%
Uncontaminated	42	1%
Unknown	321	11%
(2 missing)		

ORIGINAL PURPOSE		
<i>For what purpose was the sharp item originally used?</i>		
Unknown, N/A	259	9%
Injection, IM/subcutaneous	501	17%
Heparin or saline flush	100	3%
Other injection/aspiration I.V.	153	5%
Connect I.V. line	44	1%
Start I.V. or heparin lock	197	7%
Draw venous blood sample	496	17%
Draw arterial blood sample	67	2%
Obtain body fluid/tissue sample	50	2%
Fingerstick/heel stick	85	3%
Suturing	421	14%
Cutting (surgery)	214	7%
Electrocautery	10	0%
Contain specimen/pharmaceutical	33	1%
Place arterial line	4	0%
Fingernails/teeth	48	2%
Other	317	11%
(4 missing)		

HOW INJURY OCCURRED		
<i>Did the injury occur:</i>		
Before use	0	0%
During use	843	28%
Between steps	366	12%
Disassembling	163	5%
Preparing for reuse	58	2%
Recapping	106	4%
Withdrawing from resistant material	95	3%
Other after use, before disposal	669	22%
Item left on disposal container	19	1%
Putting item into disposal container	256	9%
After disposal	75	2%
Pierced side of disposal container	16	1%
Pierced side of inappropriate disposal container	131	4%
Restraining	17	1%
Other	181	6%
(7 missing)		

DEVICE		
<i>What device or item caused the injury?</i>		
Disposable syringe	839	28%
Prefilled cartridge syringe	97	3%
Blood gas syringe	35	1%
Syringe, other type or not sure which	27	1%
Needle on I.V. line	49	2%
Winged steel needle I.V. set	203	7%
I.V. catheter (stylet)	166	6%
Vacuum tube blood collection needle	179	6%
Spinal or epidural needle	9	0%
Unattached hypodermic needle	46	2%
Arterial catheter introducer needle	4	0%
Central line catheter introducer needle	6	0%
Drum catheter needle	2	0%
Other vascular catheter needle	2	0%
Other non-vascular catheter needle	2	0%
Needle, not sure what kind	116	4%
Other needle	91	3%
.		
Lancet	82	3%
Suture needle	409	14%
Scalpel blade	162	5%
Razor	13	0%
Pipette (plastic)	1	0%
Scissors	36	1%
Bovie electrocautery device	11	0%
Bone cutter	7	0%
Bone chip	1	0%
Towel clip	6	0%
Microtome blade	8	0%
Trocar	10	0%
Vacuum tube, plastic	3	0%
Specimen/test tube, plastic	1	0%
Fingernails/teeth	48	2%
Scalpel, disposable	43	1%
Retractor, skin/bone hooks	21	1%
Staples/steel sutures	3	0%
Wire	11	0%
Pin	9	0%
Drill bit/bur	6	0%
Pickups/forceps/hemostats/clamps	6	0%
Sharp item, not sure what kind	38	1%

Other item	84	3%
Medication ampule	1	0%
Medication vial (small)	0	0%
Medication/I.V. bottle (large)	0	0%
Pipette, glass	3	0%
Vacuum tube, glass	7	0%
Specimen/test tube, glass	7	0%
Capillary tube	10	0%
Glass slide	7	0%
Glass item, not sure what kind	8	0%
Other glass item (45 missing)	15	0%

SAFETY DESIGN

If the item causing the injury was a needle, was it a safety design with a shielded, recessed, or retractable needle?

Yes	221	7%
No/not applicable (18 missing)	2752	92%

SEVERITY OF INJURY

Was the injury:

Superficial	1505	50%
Moderate	1370	46%
Severe (28 missing)	98	3%

BODY PART

Right hand, back	311
Right hand, front	879
Left hand, back	376
Left hand, front	1136
Right arm	63
Left arm	48
Head	8
Chest	6
Back	0
Mid-body	7

Right leg	32
Left leg	37
Right foot and ankle	10
Left foot and ankle	5
(85 missing)	

OSHA		
<i>Is this incident OSHA reportable?</i>		
Yes	513	17%
No	1637	54%
(853 missing)		

<i>For those cases that are OSHA reportable:</i>	
Cumulative number of days away from work:	1
Cumulative number of days of restricted work activity:	0