

1.1 Background of the study

Health care activities can generate different kinds of hazardous wastes. Mismanagement of these wastes can result in environmental and occupational health risks. Developing countries are resource-constrained when it comes to safe management of hospital wastes. This study summarizes the main issues faced in hospital waste management in developing countries. A review of the existing literature suggests that regulations and legislations focusing on hospital waste management are recent accomplishments in many of these countries. Implementation of these rules varies from one hospital to another. Moreover, wide variations exist in waste generation rates within as well as across these countries. This is mainly attributable to a lack of an agreement on the definitions and the methodology among the researchers to measure such wastes. Furthermore, hospitals in these countries suffer from poor waste segregation, collection, storage, transportation and disposal practices, which can lead to occupational and environmental risks. Knowledge and awareness regarding proper waste management remain low in the absence of training for hospital staff. Moreover, hospital sanitary workers, and scavengers, operate without the provision of safety equipment or immunization. Unsegregated waste is illegally recycled, leading to further safety risks. Overall, hospital waste management in developing countries faces several challenges. Sustainable waste management practices can go a long way in reducing the harmful effects of hospital wastes.

Hospital waste management has become a critical issue as it poses potential health risks and damage to the environment. It is an issue that is taking central place in the national health policies of many countries. In developing countries, hospital wastes have not received sufficient attention. This is because, very often, health issues compete with other sectors of the economy for the very limited resources available. In many countries, hazardous and medical wastes are still handled and disposed together with domestic wastes, posing a great health risk to municipal workers, the public and the environment. Hospital waste must be separated from municipal waste, but in many parts of Africa it tends to be collected along with the rest of the waste stream (Kgathi and Bolanee, 2001; Taru and Kuvarega, 2005). Most hazardous and toxic wastes are placed on landfills with few safeguards to protect nearby inhabitants and water sources from contamination. This is usually the case in developing nations (Hardoy, 1992).

1.2 Statement of the problem

There is a serious concern regarding hospital waste which has not been adequately managed especially in primary health care centers (PATHS, 2005). In most cases there is inadequate training of primary health care workers on hospital waste management practices and nonexistent segregation of hospital waste and risky disposal system. The dumping sites are open and uncontrolled and located in the midst of residential areas. In addition, the waste handling behavior of the people itself is risky. They dispose off their waste as cheaply and as quickly as possible without recourse to the hygienic means of doing it (Malumfashi, Mukhtar, & Adamu, 2011). Therefore, the need arise to find and Train hospital staffs in Gombe state on the best and safest way to dispose hospital wastes.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study include:

To find the best way to dispose hospital wastes in Gombe.

To find a way to segregate hospital wastes into segments.

To find the best way to transport wastes from hospitals to dump sites.

To find the best way to manage dump sites.

1.4 Research Questions

What are hospital wastes?

What is the best way to dispose hospital wastes?

What are the existing procedures involved in treatment and storage of hospital waste in Gombe?

What are the various methods of final hospital waste disposal?

How is hospital waste segregated into various components?

How is waste collected and transported to waste disposal sites?

How can good hospital waste management be made effective in Gombe state?

1.5 Significance of the study

The importance of this study is to find the best way to dispose/ manage hospital wastes and to create the necessary awareness to hospital staffs in Gombe, regarding the health risk of hospital waste. It will also recommend to Government and policy makers on the need to employ the necessary manpower and strategies on waste collection, storage, treatment and disposal, which will be beneficial to the community. And also, to advise health providers on the need to ensure proper collection, storage, transportation, treatment and final disposal of hospital waste.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study focuses on the management of hospital wastes in Gombe.

1.7 Limitation of the study

This study is limited to hospitals in Gombe.

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A STUDY ON HOSPITAL WASTES IN GOMBE.

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