

ORIGINAL PAPER

Prevalence of Occupational Exposure to Pathogens and Reporting Behaviour among Cypriot Nurses

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Abstract

Background: Occupational exposure to pathogens forms a major concern among nurses, the largest team among healthcare professionals. Unfortunately, international literature marks high rates of occupational exposure to pathogens among nurses. Data from these studies allow to the implementation of prevention programs to avoid such incidences.

Aim: To assess the prevalence of Cypriot nurses' occupational exposure to pathogens as well as their reporting behaviour following such incidences.

Methodology: A cross sectional survey has been conducted among a convenience sample of 577 nurses, during March and May 2010.

Results: Our analysis demonstrated that almost half of Cypriot nurses (48.4%) had at least one incidence of occupational exposure to pathogens, with more than 20% of the exposed nurses having been exposed via more than one mode. The majority of them have made a report of the incident, according to the policy of their hospital. Main reasons for not reporting such a critical incident included being too busy and forgetfulness.

Conclusions: The results indicate that exposure to pathogens among Cypriot nurses is high, a fact that puts them into danger for acquiring an infection. A risk management program should be implemented to reduce such incidents.

Key words: healthcare associated infections, nurse, occupational exposure, prevalence, risk management