

## Editorial

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doi: 10.3396/IJIC.v10i1.001.14

Healthcare waste is a huge problem all over the world, and solutions for waste disposal are very different depending mostly on resources. We have prepared a special issue devoted to healthcare waste in different parts of the world.

First we have a review of Ed Krisiunas, who describes how we arrived to this problem now, gives us the definitions and description of infectious healthcare waste, is this waste a public health risk and where, specifically describes sharps bins and safe needle devices, as well as management of larger volumes of blood, body fluids, urine and faeces. Treatment technologies are shortly described, as well as recycling and reprocessing of healthcare waste.

In the next review article Jan-Gerd Kühling comments seven most typical myths about treatment of healthcare waste in the light of the evidence based truth: about incineration of healthcare waste, waste "sterilisation", shredding contaminated waste, disposal of blood, the usage of old autoclaves and the usage of new autoclaves for waste decontamination and centralised treatment of hazardous healthcare waste.

In the next article Xiao Lin and co-authors give us an insight in situation with needle stick and sharps

injuries (NSI) in central sterile supply department (CSSD) of hospitals in China, based on semi-structured questionnaire and encompassing 342 participants in 30 hospitals. They report 88.9% and 88.2% of CSSD nurses being exposed to at least one NSI in their lifetime and in the last year, respectively. As many as 32.3% of NSI occurred with disposable needles, that would be inexcusable as those should be already discarded in wards. The authors did very thorough analysis of distribution of time and site of NSI, type of instruments, operating process, post-exposure treatment, reporting of NSI and risk factors for NSI. The authors recommend a comprehensive approach to reduce this exposure in CSSD.

Abimbola Sowande and co-authors present results of a project for injection safety and healthcare waste management in Nigeria. They have shown how the active approach can improve the field of healthcare workers protection: as a result, immediate disposal of used sharps improved, and also the availability of relevant policies at service sites. The authors point out the challenges to improve the situation in a country with limited resources.

Hansen and colleagues give us another picture – healthcare waste management in Germany. From

the article we can see how precisely this problem is legally regulated –German hospitals, but also all other health facilities, have to respect laws and regulations, occupational safety and environment protection. The authors describe composition and classification of healthcare waste (presented in text and very informative table), and specifically describe hazardous infectious waste (in the table too). At the end they discuss the problems that were found out during audits of healthcare management.

In her second article in this issue, Abimbola Sowande describes the healthcare waste management in Nigerian hospitals. The author shows how a country with limited resources, participating in projects like U.S. President's Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and AIDS Support and Technical Assistance Resources (AIDSTAR), with the support from the country politics, can improve its healthcare waste management capacity: during 4-year period (2004-2008) the healthcare waste management was improved in the country, and less healthcare facilities (HF) had loose waste and loose sharps around the facilities, and also 37% of HF had satisfactory waste disposal practices in 2008 compared with 15% in 2004.

In the last article, Walter Popp and co-authors show an experience of Mongolian situation about development of healthcare waste management. Mongolia has good legal basis for medical waste management according to international standards. But reality is different, especially outside the capital of the country. The authors described the situation where there are several problems, especially outside of the capital Ulaanbaatar. The situation is described, examples of problems are given and also some proposals are made how to improve the situation. The help of Asian Development Bank will be useful in implementing better management of healthcare waste management in the whole of Mongolia, with the participation of Federal Ministry of Health of Germany and WHO.

I found this special issue very interesting and very important as we can see how different is the healthcare waste management in different parts of the world, and on the other hand, how much is still needed to improve it in many parts of the world. Furthermore, some possible solutions are presented too. I hope that you would find it interesting too.