

Hospital Waste Management as an Emergent Public Health Concern in Pakistan

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Hospital waste is very small in quantity but it carries a huge risk in the transmission of disease and injury. It is considered a special type of waste due to its potency to infect the population. According to World Health Organization (WHO) waste that is contagious, containing toxic metals, infected diagnostic material, and decontaminators is said to be hospital waste [1]. According to WHO estimates around three million healthcare providers globally are exposed to blood-borne infections [2]. Poor and inappropriate management of waste material can cause very serious health outcomes and it may contribute a substantial impact on the environment [3].

The term hospital waste management means the methods and techniques used by hospitals to restrict disease from spreading into the environment. In low to middle-income c of hospital waste. The lack of appropriate segregation of the contaminated material, its collection method, proper storage mechanism, and transportation leads to the failure of management of hospital waste. This failure is the foremost reason for the spread of many infectious diseases within the population and may burden the healthcare system [4]. In 2005, the Biosafety Rules came into existence, but these rules are not followed by healthcare institutions and healthcare professionals for the management of hospital waste. There is not any appropriate storage of the waste material before it may be disposed of and the waste material's segregation into various sections is nearly non-existing in the healthcare setup in Pakistan [5].

According to the Pakistan Hospital waste management (PAK HWM) Rules 2005, there is a structured hospital waste management system that includes a team for hospital waste, a proper waste management plan, and reporting of generated waste within the hospital every week [6]. For the development of proper hospital waste management, healthcare institutions are required to create policies to address the waste management issue. Along with the policies for hospital waste management, compliance with the documentation of the activities is an important step for the surveillance of waste management [7]. The existence of appropriate legislation, adequate financial aid, and proper training of hospital managers and clinical staff can improve waste management in hospitals. Lack of knowledge regarding the laws and the incorrect use of rules and regulations leads to the reuse of the waste material which is a source for the spread of diseases [8].

The goal of the management of hospital waste is to prevent the spread of diseases within the population. To understand

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this, management of the waste material and its appropriate segregation is the foremost important aspect and a cost-effective method to deal with the rising concern in Pakistan. Investing in technologies without properly assigning the responsibilities to the staff, according to their role in waste production and its disposal may lead to disastrous effects and a failure to control communicable diseases. To improve adherence to the national guidelines in hospitals and a mechanism to maintain a clean and healthy environment for the nation.

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