

ABSTRACT

The Current Infectious Waste Management System at the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI)

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Inadequate infectious Waste Management practices pose serious problems in health care facilities. According to Bencko (1993), this is primarily caused by the diversity of the individual components of the waste which constitute a risk to health if inadequately handled. It is evident that economic and technical conditions for both a safe disposal as well as efficient steam sterilization and management practices based on legal regulations consequently will contribute to the protection of both human health and the environment.

In a study conducted during the months of January to April 1997 describing the current infectious waste management system at the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI). It was found that a spectrum of infectious waste is generated from the UHWI, including blood and blood-splattered materials, bandages, body parts, wastes from the clinical laboratories and "sharps" (the name given to needles and scalpels). The characteristic shared by these wastes is the potential for contamination with infectious agents.

The writer concluded that the policies and practices found at the hospital for the management of infectious waste were highly unstructured and informal.