



## **KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICES AND BARRIERS AMONG HOSPITAL CLEANERS ON SAFE WASTE TRANSPORT AT THE KANDY TEACHING HOSPITAL**

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Safe waste transport is the process of transporting health care waste that is generated during diagnosis, treatment or immunization of humans or animals in any health care facility from generated area to storage, without any hazards to the environment and the community. Waste transport is equally important as waste segregation in effective waste management. In this study safe waste transport is defined as transport of segregated waste from wards, clinics or special units to the main waste storage area. Hospital cleaners are the designated personnel for waste transport at the Kandy Teaching Hospital.

The aim of this study was to examine the knowledge, practices and barriers among hospital cleaners on safe waste transport at the Kandy Teaching Hospital. Methods: A quantitative non experimental descriptive study. An interviewer administered questionnaires to a convenience sample of 160 hospital cleaners in the Teaching Hospital Kandy. Data analysis was carried out with descriptive statistics using Microsoft Excel.

The results revealed that 53% of cleaners had enough knowledge regarding safe waste transport measures. Among the participants 56% were aware of World Health Organization recommended transport measures such as using carts or trolleys and 67% of cleaners had knowledge about the importance of wearing protective equipment. 51% of cleaners engaged in malpractices during safe waste transport where 95% of participants used only polythene bags for waste transport. Furthermore, 53% of cleaners showed that they have been affected by some possible barriers to effective waste transport. It is stated that 57% of hospital cleaners were not provided with sufficient heavy duty gloves, masks and boots while 69% revealed that they were not provided training regarding safe waste transport.

Study findings highlighted that knowledge and practices of cleaners are at an acceptable level which is more than 53% but barriers inhibit the appropriate practices. Therefore, strengthening of educational and training programs is needed.

**Keywords:** Health care waste, Safe waste transport, Hospital cleaners, Teaching Hospital Kandy

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