

Management of bio-hazardous waste Saint Louis (Senegal): A serious challenge in public health

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Saint-Louis is one of the fourteen administrative regions of Senegal. Consisting of 19,044 km² (7,353 mi²), the region is limited on the north by the Senegal River, on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, in the south and in the east by other regions of the country. There are approximately nine hundred thousand (900 000) inhabitants.

Its medical infrastructure includes 2 hospitals, 5 public health centers and 1 analysis laboratory. Private health facilities consist of doctor's offices, medical laboratories, and one center for biomedical research (BRC EPLS).

All these facilities together produce an enormous quantity of bio-hazardous wastes but unfortunately there is not a single Bio-Hazardous Waste treatment unit in the entire region.

With concern for complying with Good Clinical Practices in biohazardous waster management, the EPLS Centre for Biomedical Research has recently concluded an agreement with Hôpital Principal de Dakar to dispose of biohazardous wastes at a cost of 1,200 FCFA per kilogram, or \$1.07 per pound.

The other medical facilities, such as the Hôpital Regional de Saint-Louis, which produces a daily quantity of BHW infinitely more important and whose budget does not even cover its operating requirements,, cannot afford to properly dispose of biohazardous waste materials and are obliged to dispose of their BHW in nature (either in the river, the sea, or in the ground).

The consequences of improper disposal of untreated biohazardous wastes are harmful to both the environment and to humans. Contagious diseases like hepatitis B or poisoning are both two of the possible consequences in humans, and small children are especially vulnerable. In the natural environment both soil and water, whether rivers or oceans, can be contaminated, causing harmful consequences to flora, fauna, and the food supply. In this context, it becomes urgent that Saint-Louis and the other regions of Senegal benefit from a standardized and permanently funded Biohazardous Waste Treatment Unit that complies with international standards.

Biography

Cheikh Saya Sow is an engineer in Hygiene Quality Safety Environment; he studied to the Polytechnic College of Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar. He has besides a University Degree in Quality Management of Pierre et Marie Curie University (Paris VI). He is the Quality Responsible of BRC EPLS which leads research projects centered on diseases connected to water (Bilharziasises, Malaria) in Senegal River valley.

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