Knowledge, awareness and compliance with standard precautions among health workers in North Eastern Nigeria

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Background: Health care workers (HCWs) are at risk of various occupational hazards in the hospital, including exposure to blood borne infections such as Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) and hepatitis B and C virus (HBV and HCV) infection from sharps injuries and contact with body fluids. Compliance on the part of Healthcare workers (HCWs) with standard precautions has been recognized as being an efficient means to prevent and control healthcare associated infections.

Objective: To assess knowledge, awareness and compliance of universal precautions among health workers in north eastern Nigeria.

Method: This is a crosssectional study conducted between March and August 2010. A 32-item self-administered questionnaire and observational checklist were used to obtain information from the health workers. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 17 and the level of significant was at p-value of <0.05

Results: Less than one-fifth (13%) of the respondents have adequate knowledge of universal precautions with females (67.8%) better than the males (32.2%) (p<0.05). Nurses (85.7%), midwives (80.2%) and community health officers (69.8%) were very knowledgeable of universal precautions compared with other studied health workers. Those with ten years and above working experience had a high level of awareness of universal precautions than those with below five years (p<0.05). Compliance with the use of sterile gloves, handling and disposal of needles and other sharp objects was higher than the knowledge of these procedures recorded (p<0.05) especially among those with experience of ten years and above.