Determination of a period prevalence rate of blood and body fluid exposures in NHS general dental practitioners

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ABSTRACT

Background: Blood and body fluid exposures are an under reported hazard. Universal precautions, safety syringes, personal protective equipment and immunisation have reduced risk in dentists. Information on these exposures is lacking in Northern Ireland dentists.

Objective: To determine a period prevalence rate of blood and body fluid exposures in Northern Ireland dentists.

Methods: A sample of 322 dentists was issued a postal questionnaire. Information on occupational blood and body fluids exposures within the previous 12 months was analysed using SPSS version 15.

Results: 75% response rate. Period prevalence rate was 22.3%. 96.3% were percutaneous injuries. 44.4% involved a syringe needle. 11.1% sustained a leg injury. 87% did not seek treatment. Reason given (94.4%) was that they are at no or low risk from injury. An injury with a contaminated device was significantly associated with a change in practice p<0.01.

Conclusion: Dentists sustain occupational blood and body fluid exposures frequently. The majority do not seek treatment due to perception of no or low risk. Exposures are consistent with other studies.

References:


Conflict of interests: None