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**MATRIC NO: 17/MHS08/001**

**COURSE: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**

**ASSIGNMENT**

What are the hazards healthcare workers are exposed to? Discuss and explain giving examples.

**ANSWER**

Hazards healthcare workers are exposed to include:

1. Biological Hazards
2. Chemical Hazards
3. Psychosocial Hazards
4. Physical Hazards
5. Ergonomic Hazards
6. Mechanical Hazards

**BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS** Biologic hazards in health care industry include blood borne and air borne pathogens. Most biologic hazards can be classified as infectious or immunologically active. As an example, accidental injection or splash of blood borne viruses (HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C) is the major hazard of needle stick injuries especially in laboratory and dialysis staff and medical trainers. More examples include: Bacteria – Leptospirosis and Tuberculosis SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Disease) - Coronavirus

Preventive strategies include:

* Safe collection of fluids and tissues and safe disposal of clothing and equipment
* Use of personal protective equipment’s (Gloves, masks, eye protection, face shield, aprons or gowns)
* Immunization before and after contact.

**CHEMICAL HAZARDS**

Many chemicals in hospitals are capable of producing adverse health effects through inhalation or by absorption through the skin, which act on the hematopoietic system and damage the lungs, skin, eyes, mucous membranes, Example of chemical hazards in the workplace for health care workers include:

* Anesthetic gases
* Disinfectant agents
* Ethylene oxide
* Antimicrobial drugs
* Antineoplastic agents
* Formaldehyde
* Glutaraldehyde,
* Latex and solvents.

Regular maintenance and inspections of anesthesia delivery equipment, use of scavenging systems, maintenance of room ventilation rate, and provisions of training to staff members could be effective in reduction to exposure.

**PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS**

Violence by both patients and coworkers are one of the psychosocial hazards for health care workers, all violence that hospital staffs experience isn’t physical. Shift work is one of the well-known and inevitable psychosocial hazards in health care setting, which has different health outcomes such as sleep disturbance, psychosocial disorders, gastrointestinal problems etc.

**PHYSICAL HAZARDS** Potential physical exposures in the hospitals consist of;

* Excessive noise in sterilization center, operating room, food service area, engineering unite
* Ionizing and non – ionizing Radiation – such as laser and radiofrequency
* Slips – Wet ground especially nurses and workers that wheel patients.

Medical evaluation with focus on visual activity and fundoscopic examination are recommended in pre – employment, after accident and end of employment.

**ERGONOMIC HAZARDS** Ergonomic hazards include;

* Heavy lifting
* Standing too long for a period of time
* Sitting too long
* Eye strain due to poor light

These ergonomic hazards can lead to musculoskeletal disorders which can affect the nerves, tendons, muscles and supporting structures of the body.

**MECHANICAL HAZARDS** Mechanical hazards are created as a result of either powered or manual (human) use of tools, equipment or machinery and plant. Examples include:

* Lacerations
* Punctures or abrasions
* Accidents