Needlestick and other sharps injuries are a key Canadian public health issue, affecting 70,000 individuals per year (or an average of 192 per day) at a cost of approximately $140 million. It is estimated by the Alliance for Sharps Safety and Needlestick Prevention in Canada that 33,000 needlestick and sharps injuries occur in Ontario each year.

Objectives

When the administration at Toronto East General Hospital examined sharps-related injuries at their institution, it was determined that blood collection and patient injections posed the greatest risk for these injuries. The goal of the hospital was to reduce needlestick injuries (NSIs) by 20% within a year as well as to increase employee awareness on avoiding these injuries.

A safety program was initiated at Toronto East General Hospital that focused on blood collection and patient injection and included the conversion to safety-engineered devices.

This safety program included adoption of the BD Vacutainer® Eclipse™ Needle for blood collection and the BD Vacutainer® Eclipse™ Needles and syringes for injection. The BD Vacutainer® Eclipse™ Needle incorporates a patented safety shield that is activated with one hand to cover the needle immediately after use. BD also provided training, education and support on these devices to assist in implementation for emergency room and intensive care unit staff.

Results

Since the safety program was initiated at Toronto East General Hospital, sharps injuries declined by 80%, surpassing the original first year goal of a 20% reduction in injuries. Forty one injuries were reported in 2003; this number decreased to 8 in 2004. This included the complete elimination of injuries during blood collection procedures for that year.

Conclusion

In addition to training and education, the integration of safety-engineered devices, such as the BD Vacutainer® Eclipse™ Needle, enabled the staff at Toronto East General Hospital to exceed their initial goal in sharps injury reduction.