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**CARING HANDS ON HARM'S WAY: SHARP INJURIES IN HOSPITAL SETTINGS IN UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

doi:10.1136/injuryprev-2012-040590m.29

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**Background** Sharp injuries predispose health care workers (HCWs) to serious infectious diseases. Data is lacking regarding sharp

injuries among doctors and nurses working in trauma and surgical units in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

**Aims/Objectives/Purpose** To identify the burden and cause of sharp injuries among health care workers.

**Methods** A cross sectional study was conducted in Emergency, Intensive care unit, General Surgery, Orthopaedics and Obstetrics and Gynaecology departments of two major teaching hospitals Tawam and Al Ain hospitals in Al Ain, Abu Dhabi Emirate. Data on sharp injuries were collected using a pilot-tested self-administered questionnaire.

**Results/Outcome** Of the study sample of 550 doctors and nurses approached, 306 (55.6%) responded. The prevalence of sharp injuries was 12% among the participants. A higher proportion of doctors (23%) compared to nurses (7%) had sharp injuries. There was significant correlation between those who worked  $\geq 12$  h per shift and having sharp injury ( $p < 0.003$ ). Injuries were mostly caused by two devices; syringe needles and suture needles (40% each). About 65% of the injured believed that stress and long shift hours contributed to their injury. More nurses (87%) than doctors (50%) reported their injuries. Only 68.4% of doctors and 86.4% of nurses received annual sharp safety training.

**Significance/Contribution to the Field** A high proportion of health care workers in major hospital had sharp injuries. Doctors were less likely to receive sharp safety training compared to nurses. There is need for safety training targeting health care workers in surgical and trauma units.