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A preliminary study of medical waste management in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria

E. O. Longe, A. Williams

Abstract:

A survey of medical waste management (MWM) practices and their implications to health and environment was carried out in metropolitan Lagos. Lagos is currently the most populous and urbanized city in the country with an estimated population of over 13 million people. The study assessed management practices in four (2 privates and 2 publics) hospitals ranging in capacity from 40 to 600 beds. Empirical data was obtained on medical waste generation, segregation, storage, collection, transportation and disposal. The observed MWM practices in all hospitals indicate absence of full compliance with the protocol for handling medical waste as stipulated in the relevant sections of the guidelines and standards for environmental pollution control in Nigeria. Three hospitals demonstrated high priority for segregation of infectious medical waste. Average generation rate of medical waste in the investigated hospitals ranged from 0.562 kg/bed.day to 0.670 kg/bed.day. Infectious waste accounts for between 26 to 37% of this volume. Only two of the hospitals investigated carry out treatment of their infectious and sharp waste types by incineration before final disposal. Burning and burial of medical waste is an unusual but common practice among the hospitals. All the hospitals employ the services of the state owned solid waste management company, the Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) for final collection, and disposal of their medical waste at government approved sites.

Keywords:

Medical waste . infectious . incineration . disposal

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