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WHO best practices for injections and related procedures toolkit



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Preface

A safe injection is one that does not harm the recipient, does not expose the provider to any avoidable risks and does not result in waste that is dangerous for the community. Unsafe injection practices can lead to transmission of bloodborne pathogens, with their associated burden of disease.

To ensure rational and safe use of injections globally, better injection safety practices are needed. The responsibility for ensuring injection safety rests with national governments, prescribers, administrators, receivers of injections and the wider community. The World Health Organization (WHO) acknowledges this responsibility of its member states and the challenges they face. Through the WHO Injection Safety programme and the Safe Injection Global Network (SIGN – whose secretariat is hosted by WHO), the organization demonstrates its commitment to preventing injection-related disease transmission for patients, health workers and the community at large, through the rational and safe use of injections. WHO and SIGN recognize the importance of infection prevention and control in injection safety.

The WHO strategy for the safe and appropriate use of injections worldwide has four objectives:

- formulating national policies and plans for the safe and appropriate use of injections;
- ensuring quality and safety of injection equipment;
- facilitating equitable access to safe injection practices and equipment;
- achieving appropriate, rational and cost-effective use of injections.

In keeping with these objectives, SIGN has developed this toolkit for injection safety and related procedures.

The toolkit covers elements of standard precautions relevant to the transmission of bloodborne pathogens through unsafe injection practices in health-care settings. The document will help to increase health workers' awareness of the importance of standard precautions relevant to injection safety. Its main target is health workers actively engaged in the administration of the various types of injections in all health and related care services, particularly at the peripheral level. However, other people administering injections may find the toolkit useful.

The main areas covered by the toolkit are:

- bloodborne pathogens transmitted through unsafe injection practices;
- relevant elements of standard precautions and associated barrier protection;
- best injection and related infection prevention and control practices;
- occupational risk factors and their management.

The toolkit is illustrated with practical designs that make it an easy source of reference for the user, and can be used to produce posters, flash cards and spreadsheets. WHO has also produced an aide-memoire, to introduce the reader to the subject.

Compliance with the toolkit is recommended, as it is expected to improve the safety of injections for both patients and health workers.

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