

## Factors Influencing Infection Prevention and Control Practices in the Emergency Department of Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital in Mbarara District-Uganda

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**Abstract :** Infection prevention and control (IPC) is a practical, evidence-based approach that prevents patients and emergency health workers from being harmed by avoidable infections as a result of antimicrobial resistance; all hospital infection control programs put together various practices which, when used appropriately, restrict the spread of infection. A breach in these control practices facilitates the transmission of infections from patients to health workers, other patients, and attendants. It is, therefore important for all emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and patients to strictly adhere to them. It is also imperative for administrators to ensure the implementation of the infection control programme for their facilities. Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate the influencing factors of prevention practices against infection exposure among emergency medical technicians (EMTs) in the emergency department at Mbarara hospital. Methodology: This was a descriptive cross-sectional study that employed a self-reported questionnaire that was filled out by 32 EMTs in the emergency department from 12th February to 3rd March 2022. The questionnaire consisted of items concerning the defensive environment and other factors influencing infection prevention and control practices in the accident and emergency department of Mbarara hospital. Results: From the findings, the majority 16 (50%) always used protective gear when doing clinical work, 14 (43.8%) didn't use protective gear, citing they were only assisting those performing resuscitations, gumboots were the least used protective gear with only 3 (9.4%) usage. About disposal techniques of specific products like blood and sharps, results showed 10 (31.3%) said blood is disposed of in red buckets, 5 (15.6%) in yellow buckets, and only 5 (15.6%) in black buckets, and 12 (37.5%) didn't respond, however, 28 (87.5%) said sharps were disposed of in a sharps container. The majority, 17 (53.1%), were not aware of the infection control guidelines even though they were pinned on walls of the emergency rooms, 15 (46.9%) said they have never had quality assurance monitoring events, 14 (43.8%) said monitoring was continuous while 15 (46.9%) said it was discrete. Conclusions: The infection control practices at the emergency department were inadequate in view of less than 100% of the EMTs observing the five principles of infection prevention, such as the use of personal protective equipment and proper waste disposal in appropriate color-coded bins. Dysfunctional infection prevention and control committees accompanied by inadequate supervision to ensure infection control remained a big challenge.

**Keywords :** emergency medical technician, infection prevention, influencing factors, infection control

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