

Environmental and Health Risks Associated with Dental Waste Management: A Review

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Abstract : Proper management of dental waste is a crucial issue for maintaining human health and the environment. The waste generated in the dental clinics has the potential for spreading infections and causing diseases, so improper disposal of these dental wastes can cause harm to the dentist, the people in immediate vicinity of the dentist, waste handlers, general public and the environment through production of toxins or as by-products of the destruction process. Staff that provide dental healthcare ought to be aware of the proper handling and the system of management of dental waste used by different dental hospitals. The method of investigation adopted in the paper involved a desk study in which documents and records relating to dental waste handling were studied to obtain background information on existing dental waste management in Nigeria other countries of the world are also mentioned as examples. Additionally, information on generation, handling, segregation, risk associated during handling and treatment of dental medical waste were sought in order to determine the best method for safe disposal. This article provides dentists with the information they need to properly dispose of mercury and amalgam waste, and provides suggestions for managing the other wastes that result from the day-to-day activities of a dental office such as: used X-ray fixers and developers; cleaners for X-ray developer systems; lead foils, shields and aprons; chemiclave/chemical sterilant solutions; disinfectants, cleaners, and other chemicals; and, general office waste. Additionally, this study may be beneficial for authorities and researchers of developing countries to work towards improving their present dental waste management system.

Keywords : clinic, dental, disposal, environment, waste management

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