

Assessment of Occupational Health and Safety Conditions of Health Care Workers in Barangay Health Centers in a Selected City in Metro Manila

Authors : Deinzal R. Uezono, Vivien Fe F. Fadrihan-Camacho, Bianca Margarita L. Medina, Antonio Domingo R. Reario, Trisha M. Salcedo, Luke Wesley P. Borromeo

Abstract : The environment of health care workers is considered one of the most hazardous settings due to the nature of their work. In developing countries especially, the Philippines, this continues to be overlooked in terms of programs and services on occupational health and safety (OHS). One possible reason for this is the existing information gap on OHS which limits data comparability and impairs effective monitoring and assessment of interventions. To address this gap, there is a need to determine the current conditions of Filipino health care workers in their workplace. This descriptive cross-sectional study assessed the occupational health and safety conditions of health care workers in barangay health centers in a selected city in Metro Manila, Philippines by: (1) determining the hazards present in the workplace; (2) determining the most common self-reported medical problems; and (3) describing the elements of an OHS system based on the six building blocks of health system. Assessment was done through walkthrough survey, self-administered questionnaire, and key informant interview. Data analysis was done using Epi Info 7 and NVivo 11. Results revealed different health hazards present in the workplace particularly biological hazards (exposure to sick patients and infectious specimens), physical hazards (inadequate space and/or lighting), chemical hazards (toxic reagents and flammable chemicals), and ergonomic hazards (activities requiring repetitive motion and awkward posture). Additionally, safety hazards (improper capping of syringe and lack of fire safety provisions) were also observed. Meanwhile, the most commonly self-reported chronic diseases among health care workers (N=336) were hypertension (20.24%, n=68) and diabetes (12.50%, n=42). Top commonly self-reported symptoms were colds (66.07%, n=222), coughs (63.10%, n=212), headache (55.65%, n=187), and muscle pain (50.60%, n=170) while other diseases were influenza (16.96%, n=57) and UTI (15.48%, n=52). In terms of the elements of the OHS system, a general policy on occupational health and safety was found to be lacking and in effect, an absence of health and safety committee overseeing the implementing and monitoring of the policy. No separate budget specific for OHS programs and services was also found to be a limitation. As a result, no OHS personnel and trainings/seminar were identified. No established information system for OHS was in place. In conclusion, health and safety hazards were observed to be present across the barangay health centers visited in a selected city in Metro Manila. Medical conditions identified as most commonly self-reported were hypertension and diabetes for chronic diseases; colds, coughs, headache, and muscle pain for medical symptoms; and influenza and UTI for other diseases. As for the elements of the occupational health and safety system, there was a lack in the general components of the six building blocks of the health system.

Keywords : health hazards, occupational health and safety, occupational health and safety system, safety hazards

Conference Title : ICOHS 2018 : International Conference on Occupational Health and Safety

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : November 12-13, 2018