



## INTRODUCTION

Safety is the state of being safe; freedom from danger, risk or injury or loss. Safety means keeping yourself and others free from harm or danger. It also means to avoid accidents by being careful with what you are doing.

The workplace is safe BUT is it hazard free?

**No.** But there are ways to prevent or at least minimize the risks.

There are many potential hazards in the workplace , such as Sharps injury, wrong patient identification, etc. The team decided to embark on a Continuous Improvement initiative to prevent sharps injury.

## WHAT ARE SHARPS INJURY?

Sharps are needles, blades ( i.e. scalpels) and other medical/dental instruments (e.g. curettes, Endodontic files, Orthodontic wires, burs etc..) that could cause an injury by cutting or pricking the skin. Sharps Injuries are a well known risk to workers in healthcare and for those who receive them they can cause anxiety and distress and may result in exposure to blood-borne diseases such as HIV, hepatitis B or C [Figure 1 & 2].

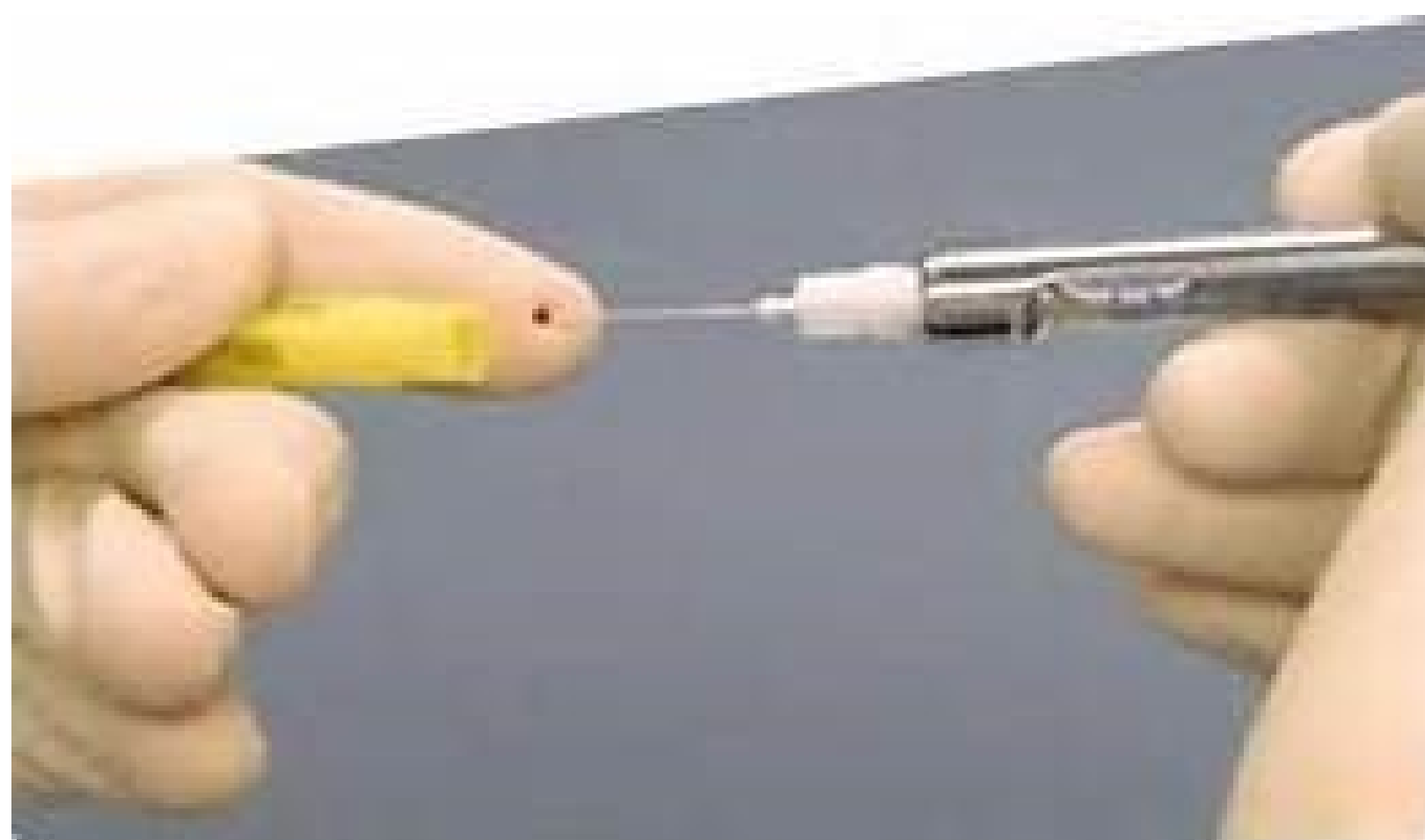


Figure 1



Figure 2

## WHO IS AT RISK?

Anyone working in healthcare can be at risk. This includes those who directly handle sharps but also includes workers who may be put at risk when sharps are not stored or disposed of correctly e.g. Housekeeping .

## UNDERSTANDING THE ROOT CAUSES

The team did an observation on the current process and using 5WHYs technique, identified that the root causes are :

- Staff use their hands to pick up sharps
- Recapping of the needles
- Used needles are not disposed immediately [Figure 3]



Figure 3

## OBJECTIVES

The team aims to achieve **ZERO Sharps Injury** in NDCS.



Figure 4

## INTERVENTIONS

- Provide training and education to new staff on proper handling of sharps.
- Give verbal announcements when passing sharps.
- Educate staff to avoid re-capping, bending or breaking needles [Figure 4].
- Follow proper technique [Figure 5] when handling sharps [Figure 5].
- Dispose of used needles and small sharps immediately in puncture resistant boxes ; sharp boxes [Figure 6].
- Regular refresher courses to remind staff on the proper usage of PPE and handling of equipment



Figure 5



Figure 6

## CONCLUSION

Healthcare workers have to constantly stay focused and alert. Do not be distracted!