Review Article

RFP Journal of Hospital Administration
Volume 7 Number 2, July-December 2023

Blue: Paradox A Confusing Risk Factor in Hospital and Community Waste Management

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How to cite this article:
Kanishk Kala/ Blue: Paradox A Confusing Risk Factor in Hospital and Community Waste Management/RFP Journal of Hospital Administration. 2023;7(2):51-53.

Abstract

Waste management is a crucial activity and should be performed as per the guidelines to ensure proper infection control. There are different norms for waste management in community and hospital. However improper handling of waste in hospital may cause a health hazard in community also. This is more prone in situations like COVID-19. Inspire of different wastes there is an interacting blue bin used for solid waste management as well as the biomedical waste management. This paper aims is to highlight the interaction of the blue colour in hospital waste as well as the solid waste management guidelines and aims to isolate colours for improving the chances of errors.

Keyword: Biomedical Waste Management; Solid Waste Management; Waste Management.

INTRODUCTION

The waste is generated during routine activities. These wastes are generated from industry, agriculture, and routine survival. The generated waste has a potential to contaminate environment and cause hazards encompassing even health problems. The wastes are even classified as industrial waste, general waste.[1]

The different wastes generated in environment are categorized in two forms solid waste and liquid waste. Solid waste category includes wastes generated from house hold, industry and hospital whereas liquid waste comprises of reagents chemicals water and washing water. The infectious diseases (HIV) and hepatitis B virus (HBV) and recently COVID-19 have enhanced the threat of infection spread from hospital to the community. Hence, the waste management is anessential activity conducted in the society. In modern times there are guidelines for waste management in the society. These guidelines are implemented in different areas of the community. In fact primarily the waste management is conducted in community and hospitals. Both of the areas have their respective guidelines with individual colour coding for the designation of the wastages in respective areas.[1,2]

Origins

The waste management is a vital activity for prevention of infection and thereby play a role in safe guarding the health. However the peculiarities of the areas make it crucial tasks in both scenarios.

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Received on: 08.04.2023

Accepted on: 10.05.2023

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A higher amount of specificity to be required in the hospital scenario to prevent any hazard or outbreak which could be a threat to the community. In addition the burden of COVID-19 has also increased the risk for a possible health hazard to spread rapidly from hospitals to community if appropriate management plan is not ensured. In such situations there should be the uniqueness in the implementation of the both solid waste management and biomedical waste management protocols so that interactions leading to a haram could not emerge.[3]

Concept Theme

Ironically blue colour of bin is an interacting factor in community and hospital waste which could lead to a confusion and could promote a health hazard by public availing the health services in situations like COVID-19. More over in community the yellow bag scheme should be popularized for collection of sanitary pads/blood/body fluid soiled items of the community to ensure uniformity and generate adherence and awareness in public for infection control and to develop good behaviours of prevention against infectious diseases.[4]

Interaction Scenario

The blue bin is also used in biomedical waste management in hospital scenario. Where it covers the medical generated waste category in which glassware is discarded. Being a health care waste colour category colour it should be restricted to health care activities only to prevent confusion and retain the medical relevance as biomedical waste management is very crucial activity and breach in this could lead to conversion of non-hazardous waste to a hazardous one which could be a threat to the community health. However in reality the blue colour is also used in municipal solid waste management guidelines and is reserved for wet wastes encompassing paper plastic glass metals and sweeping wastes.

Thus there is an interaction between the two colour schemes for the category of wastes generated which could be a risk factor to promote a health hazard. The interaction areas and hazard possibility is described as under to differentiate different shades of blue are used dark blue for community and light blue for hospital however in reality the blue colour scheme is universal and to differentiate between the shades of same colour for different waste segregation category would increase complexity and confusion leading to higher chances of errors.[4,5,6]

Table 1:. Interaction complex of blue bin in community and hospital scenario - Blue Bin Paradox

Blue Bin Community			Blue Bin Hospital
Paper cardboard and cartons	Containers & packaging of all kinds excluding those containing hazardous materials Compound packaging (tetrapak, blisters etc.)	Metals Glass (all kinds) Inerts	Broken glass vials ampoules metallic body implants
	Plastics (the plastic tubings in hospital bin comes under red category of bin concerened with recyclables)	Different Area Community House sweepings and inerts (not garden, yard or street sweepings) This area is disposables are concerned with the for possibility of error in situations when patients / relatives avail hospital services in In patient department preferably as there dedicated care is required here the chances of intermixing of wastages of Biomedical and solid waste could create a possibility of hazard	This area is concerned with the for possibility of error in situations when patients / relatives avail hospital services in In patient department preferably as there dedicated care is required here the chances of intermixing of wastages of Biomedical and solid waste could create a possibility of hazard

CONCLUSION

Waste management is a crucial activity and needs uniqueness for its optimum and uninterrupted functioning. So in this regard to implement the schemes the colour coding should be made unique so that the chances of confusion are least and effective management of biomedical waste and the

solid waste management can be ensured.

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