U.K. Nurses Call for Safer Needles in Health Settings

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Nurses in the United Kingdom are urging the National Health Service to provide them with safer, shielded hypodermic needles to prevent the risk of HIV or hepatitis transmission in health care settings, BBC News reports.

According to a poll of about 2,000 nurses in the United Kingdom conducted by the Royal College of Nursing, nearly half of respondents said they do not have access to safer injection devices, which have a collar of plastic to prevent accidental needle pricks.

“It is clear that needles injuries are an everyday threat for nurses,” said RCN general secretary Peter Carter.

“Government and employers in the NHS need to start taking this issue seriously by introducing needle policies and investing in safer alternatives to traditional needles so that these accidents don’t happen in the first place.”

The survey found that 48 percent of nurses had been stuck by a needle previously used by a patient during their careers, and just 55 percent of them said they received training about safe needle usage.

BBC news reports that since figures started being collected in the late 1990s, 11 health workers have been infected with hepatitis and five with HIV from accidental needle sticks.

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