

National Needlestick Injury and Other Exposures Hotline

The NSW Needlestick Injury Hotline, an initiative of the NSW Health Department and the Albion Street Centre, has operated successfully in NSW for 3½ years now and received over 2000 calls in that period.

It is therefore announced with great pleasure that, utilising additional funding from the Australian National Council on AIDS and Related Diseases, the service has been expanded to provide a **National Needlestick Injury and Other Exposures Hotline**. To date, Western Australia and Tasmania have been incorporated into the service and it is anticipated that other states will follow shortly.

The 24-hour, 7-day-a-week hotline provides an immediate information, support and referral service for health-care workers and is also available to the general services staff

of health-care facilities, paramedical personnel, allied health professionals, custodial officers, rangers and emergency service personnel (ambulance, police, fire) who sustain a needlestick injury and/or occupational exposure to blood or body substances in the course of their work. The service is not available to the general public.

The aim of the service is **not** to replace local management of occupational exposures but, rather, to augment existing local systems which deal with them. The hotline, although providing local services with the highest level of expertise in Australia, is neither a reporting nor a surveillance service.

Staff of the world-renowned Albion Street Centre in Sydney coordinate the hotline. Calls are answered by clinical consultants and medical officers, who provide expert advice for those at risk and/or their supervisors or treating medical officers. Referral to a local service for further risk assessment, counselling and management is offered where relevant.

Within 15 minutes of accessing the freecall 1 800 hotline a doctor or nurse will answer the call and, having made an assessment, will provide information, advice and counselling.

The team can provide the following:

- risk assessment;
- management strategies;
- prophylaxis information;
- counselling, and
- appropriate referral (a database of regional services is available for this purpose).

Free A4-size posters and pamphlets promoting the service (ideal for orientation sessions) can be obtained by ringing Sue Resnik, Philip Melling or Betty Rees on (02) 9332 1090.

The number for the National Needlestick Injury and Other Exposures Hotline is 1 800 804 823.

IMMUNISATION AND EXPOSURE MANAGEMENT

in four easy steps



- SCREENING
- EXPOSURE MANAGEMENT
- FOLLOW-UP
- STATISTICS

A more efficient way to monitor your health-care workers' (HCWs') immunisation status and blood and body fluid exposure follow-ups.

The risk of acquiring a blood-borne infection through needlestick injury concerns health administrators and HCWs worldwide.

Each hospital should carefully assess the occupational risks posed by infectious diseases, latex allergies and the use of cytotoxic agents.

In complying with OH & S guidelines, it is vital for health administrators to invest in a system which enables accurate, confidential monitoring of HCWs' immunisation status, in order to reduce risks and prevent future litigation.

For more information, contact:

MAVKA MEDICAL
(03) 9625 3554