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Staff's training for who comes into contact with cytotoxic drugs

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The workplace exposure to dangerous drugs and the resulting health risks for healthcare personnel have been well known and documented for over four decades, since it first became a recognized safety risk in the United States in the 1970s. Nowadays, the challenge of protecting workers persists and is expanding, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the incident rate of cancer is steadily increasing and, in turn, the use of cytotoxic drugs used to treat cancers is growing, amplifying the exposure to healthcare professionals. Secondly, the number and variety of healthcare workers potentially exposed to cytotoxic drugs is on the rise (e.g. Professionals in immunology, rheumatology, nephrology and dermatology) because of the rapidly expanding use of these agents in non-oncology practices for treating non-malignant diseases. Thirdly, recent studies have demonstrated a persistence of drug contamination on surfaces even though guidelines and recommendations for the safe handling of cytotoxic drugs have been issued and implemented to minimize the risk of occupational exposure. Moreover, contamination has been detected on work surfaces after recognized cleaning procedures are concluded. Cytotoxic drugs require individual manipulation for each patient prior to being administered as infusions or bolus injections. Healthcare workers who handle cytotoxic drugs are at potential risk from exposure when control measures are inadequate. Studies have shown that the risk

of exposure to them in the working environment is commonplace despite safety policy improvements and even with recommended precautions in place. It is noteworthy that healthcare workers may be exposed to small doses of a broad range of cytotoxic drugs over decades, with some workers being exposed every workday, year after year. Nurses, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have the highest risk of being potentially exposed. Other healthcare workers, involved in cleaning, transport, laundry and waste disposal of hazardous drugs or contaminated material, are also at risk.



Biography

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