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Home Sharps Disposal Project

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Introduction

- Medical facilities have processes in place to ensure safe sharps disposal.
- Patients who regularly use sharps in their home may not know or follow the state laws regarding safe disposal.
- This can create a patient safety issue.

Objective

The goal of this process improvement project was to identify how patients enrolled in the Diabetes Center of Excellence (DCCOE) were disposing of sharps in their household.

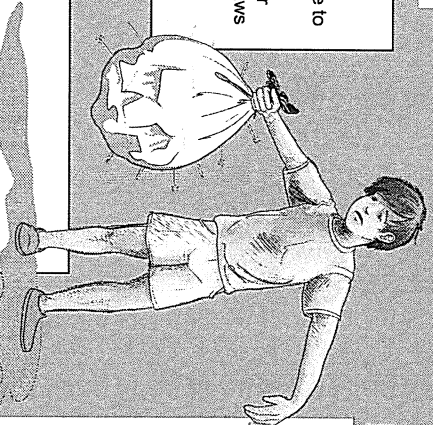


Figure 1. Sharps Disposal Survey

Date: _____

Gender: Male Female

Age: _____

Type of diabetes: Type 1 Type 2 Other

Age at Diagnosis: _____

Has a healthcare provider ever instructed you on disposal of sharps (lancets and/or needles)?

YES NO

How do you dispose of lancets (lancets)?

YES NO

Are you on therapy requiring needles? YES NO

If yes, please STOP.

How do you dispose of your needles?

YES NO

Comments: _____

Figure 2. Patient Demographics

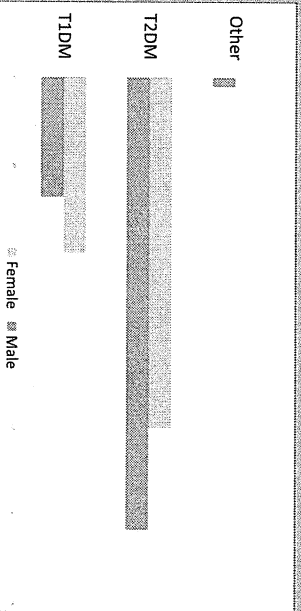
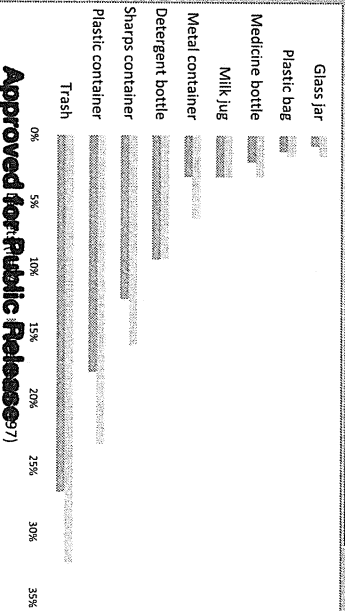


Figure 3. Disposal Container Categories



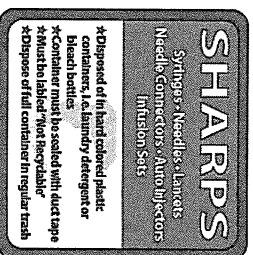
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Results

- Most patients had Type 2 diabetes (T2DM) and there was an even distribution between male and female patients
- Nearly 1/3 of patients (27%) had never had a healthcare provider tell them how to dispose of sharps at home.
- It was determined that 30-40% of the patients did not safely and properly dispose of sharps at home.
- Furthermore, 30% of patients were throwing lancets and needles in the trash without a container.

Proposed Intervention

1. A sticker with "Non Recyclable Waste" to label their disposal container
2. Information about proper sharps disposal according to Texas regulations.

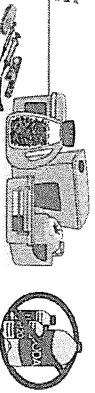


Methods

- The DCCOE surveyed 248 patients from 30 Jan - to 31 March 2017 determine how they were currently disposing of sharps (lancets, needles, infusion sets) in the home environment (Figure 1).
- Survey data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analysis was conducted in SPSS version 19.
- The team reviewed Texas law concerning safe disposal of sharps to determine whether patients were in compliance with the law or not.
- An interdisciplinary committee (DCCOE, Pharmacy, population health, and public affairs) was formed to discuss results and to decide how to intervene on this important patient safety issue.

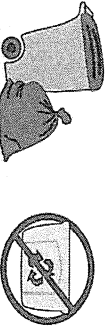
Texas Law

Put used sharps in a strong, plastic container.



When the container is full, put the sharps in a strong, plastic container and recycle it. DO NOT RECYCLE.

Put the plastic container in the household trash—don't recycle!



Discussion

- Many patients do not know how to properly dispose of sharps used at home.
- Laws vary from state to state and the onus falls on patients to know and follow laws for each state
- The transient nature of the military creates even more potential for confusion and knowledge gaps.
- The pharmacy may be a natural place to educate patients and ensure they know how to safely dispose of sharps at home.

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