

**Name of Student: Chan Kim Hung, Jennifer**

**October 2000**

**Title: The perceived causes and preventive measures of sharps injuries among nurses in an acute-care hospital**

### **ABSTRACT**

Blood-borne infections may be transmitted occupationally through parenteral exposure. Nurses are the most frequently injured class of health care workers. Sharps injuries can lead to serious or fatal infections with blood-born pathogens such as hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, or human immunodeficiency virus. The cost impact on the health service for follow-up testing and treatment for post sharps injuries; and the physical and emotional impact on the infected nurses indicates the magnitude of the problem. This was a quantitative and descriptive study which aimed to explore the prevalence, perceived contributing factors and preventive measures of sharps injuries among nurses in an acute-care hospital using non-experimental survey approach. A 43-items, self –developed questionnaire was used to gather data for the study. The questionnaire would be distributed to 100 nurses. Nurses working in the hospital who needed to handle sharps or needles in their daily practice were selected as subjects using convenience sampling. Descriptive statistics would be used to organize and summarize the collected data. The results had revealed that sharps injuries were prevalent among nurses in the hospital. Sixty-one out of the 65 (93.8%) respondents claimed to have experience of sharp injuries. 35.4% of them had four or more injuries. The highest prevalence rate was among nurses with 6-10 years' working experience. Recapping of needle was identified as the most frequent mode of injury. 73.8% of injured nurses did not report the injuries formally. The common reason for not reporting the incident was 'it was a sterile/clean sharps injury', and 'afraid of a blood-borne infection would be transmitted to you' was the major reason for reporting the injury.' Recapping of needle' scored highest among the direct cause perceived by nurses as contributory to their sharps injuries. The study revealed that a significant relationship between nursing knowledge of Universal Precaution Guidelines and frequency of injuries did indeed exist. 'Adequate staff-to-patient ratio' and 'altering risk behaviors' were identified as the most perceived important preventive measures. A comprehensive preventive program should address the institutional, behavioral and engineering factors which contribute to the sharps injuries in order to maximize prevention effectiveness.