# Research

# Patterns of needle disposal among insulin using patients with Diabetes Mellitus: An audit

### Gowri P

Consultant Diabetologist, Kauvery Hospital, Cantonment, Trichy

### Background

Oral Antidiabetic Drugs (OADs) remain the mainstay in the treatment of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM).

Insulin therapy becomes inevitable as the disease progresses.

Roughly 4 of 10 patients with T2DM in India are using insulin alone or in combination with OADs at any given point of time.

Where are they disposing the syringes and needles?

### **Burden of the Problem**

- Sharp disposal is strictly regulated in hospital settings, BUT this is not the case in the community.
- At home insulin usage- No guidelines
  - 1. Needle Stick Injuries
  - 2. Transmission of Blood Borne Infections (BBI)
  - 3. Environmental Pollution

### Literature Review

• Studies done in different countries showed that proportion of various kinds of sharps thrown into the household bin varied from 46.9% to 67.6%.

- Studies done in developed countries have also showed improper sharp disposal practices among diabetes patients to be as high as 80–90%
- Only in less than 10% of cases specific containers were used to dispose insulin injection waste.

### Guidelines

1.Place all needles in a sharps disposal container immediately after use.

2.Sharps disposal containers should be kept out of reach of children and pets.

3.When sharps disposal container is about three-quarters (3/4) full - DISCARD

4. DO NOT reuse sharps disposal containers by accessing through these services:

- Drop Box or Supervised Collection Sites
- Household Hazardous Waste
   Collection Sites
- Mail-Back Programs
- Residential Special Waste
   Pick-Up Services

### Audit Design

- Aim-to assess the prevalence of safe disposal of insulin needles among diabetic patients.
- Method- data collected from diabetic individuals coming to our OPD from Aug 15<sup>th</sup> to Sep 15<sup>th</sup>.
- This was a cross-sectional study using convenience sampling technique.

### Audit Design- continued

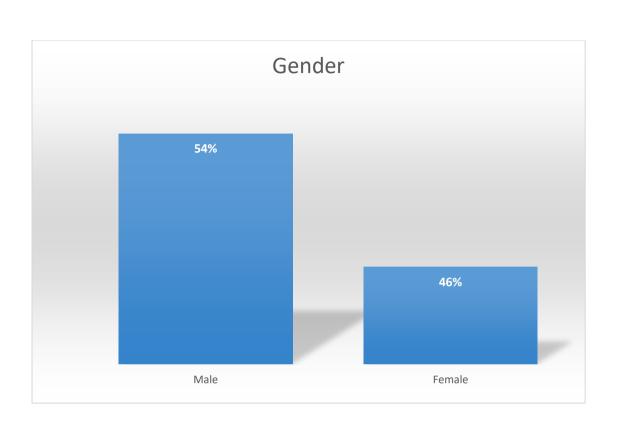
Results

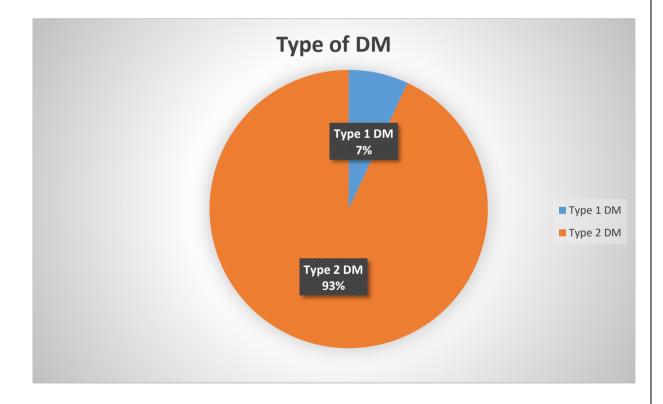
# Safe sharps disposal - discarding used insulin needles in designated sharps or puncture-resistant containers;

- Other sharps disposal methods Unsafe.
- A semi structured questionnaire was designed which our OPD Staff filled after discussing with them.
  - Type of Diabetes
  - Duration of Insulin Use
  - Education on Syringe Disposal

Gender	Count	%
Male	186	54%
Female	158	46%
Over All	344	

Type of DM	Count	%
Type 1 DM	24	7%
Type 2 DM	320	93%
Over All	344	

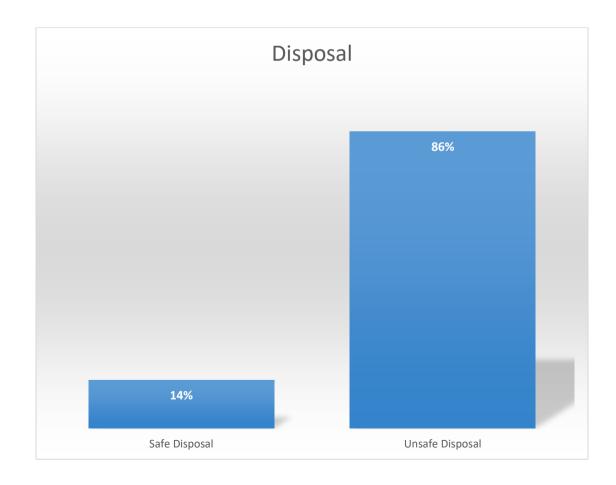


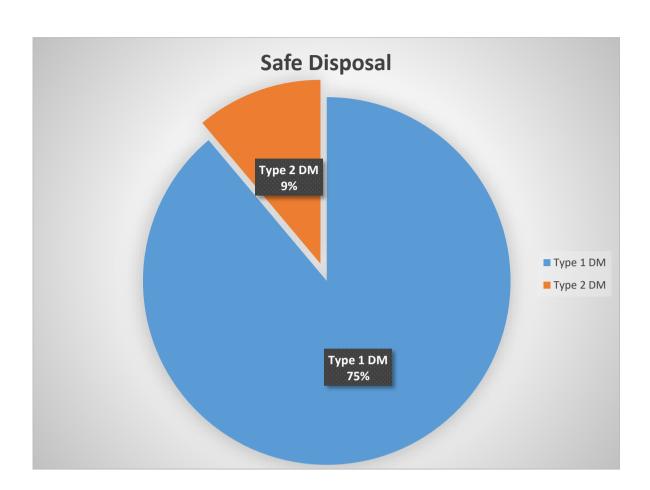


# **Results: Safe & Unsafe**

Disposal	Count	%
Safe Disposal	48	14%
Unsafe Disposal	296	86%
Over All	344	

Safe Disposal			
Type of DM	Count	%	
Type 1 DM	18/24	75%	
Type 2 DM	30/320	9%	
Over All	48/344	14%	



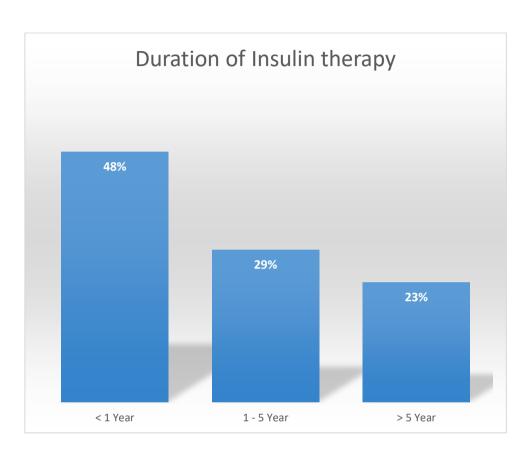


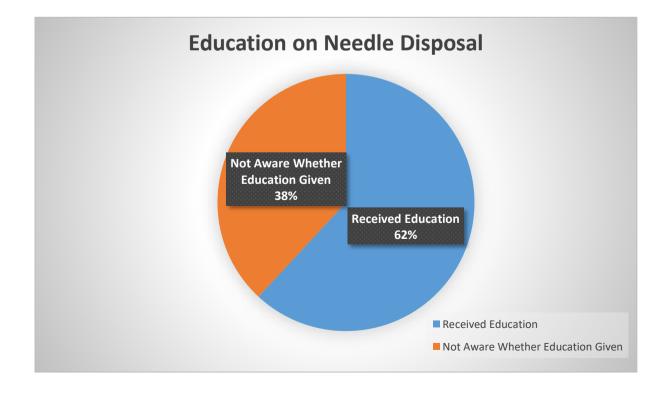
# Duration of Insulin & Type of DM

Dur of Insulin	Count	%
<1 Year	23	48%
1 - 5 Year	14	29%
>5 Year	11	23%
Over All	48	

Education on Needle Disposal	Count	%
Received Education	213	62%
Not Aware Whether Education Given	131	38%
Over All	344	

Vol 2023 Issue 3 October Kauverian Medical Journal





### Vol 2023 Issue 3 October Kauverian Medical Journal

## **Patterns of Insulin Disposal**

- Drainage
- Kitchebn Waste
- Unused Well/Lake
- Burn and Dispose
- Bury in the Ground
- Flush in the Toilet

## Conclusion

- SAFE SHARP DISPOSAL practice was VERY LOW in our sample. (14%)
- Safe insulin disposal practice wanes off as duration of insulin usage increases.
- Type 1 Diabetic children are following safe disposal advice than adults
- One third of the patients are not aware about the education received.

## Recommendations

- 1. Education on safe disposal
- 2. Pictorial display
- 3. Annual comprehensive check-up reassess insulin technique and disposal practice
- 4. Request To the pharmacy- Plastic container for sale

## **Education before Audit**





## Notice on Board



### References

- [1]. Mohan V, et al. Current status of management, control, complications and psychosocial aspects of patients with diabetes in India: Results from the Diab Care India 2011 Study. Indian J Endocrinol Metab. 2014;18:370–8.
- [2]. Bithika M. Thompson, et al. Unsafe sharps disposal among insulin-using

patients with Diabetes Mellitus: An emerging global crisis. J Diabetes Sci Technol. 2022;16(6):1376–1380.

[3]. The insulin sharps disposal study:
Evaluation of a structured patient education initiative in an urban community health centre in India Family Med Prim Care. 2020 Dec; 9(12): 6164–6170.