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Submission:

I am writing to let you know that the current system for sharps disposal in hospital is ineffective. We were given a new IV catheter to use that has a safety button that allows the user to retract the needle into a protective sleeve once the plastic sheath is in the vein. It sounds great in theory but what really happens is that due to the actual technique required a percentage of people withdraw the sharp from the sheath while it is still unretracted and then retract it later because the spring loaded device sprays blood around and allows the patients blood to leak all over while you are connecting the tubing. We were not invited to trial multiple devices and find the best one we were just told that this is what we are using. There is a much better device on the market that retracts quietly on its own which eliminates the user choice to use it in an unsafe manner. It also mimics our old devices in handling so we don't have to develop a new technique after perfecting the old one. Many patients have suffered multiple IV starts as we get used to the new awkward catheters that aren't particularly safe anyway.

I am unable to access the entire legislation on sharps at the moment but am concerned that these kinds of devices aren't tested and regulated by WorkSafeBC. It would be nice if front line staff could test and evaluate any of these so called safety devices before they are widely available to the health authorities. Some of them have been engineered very cleverly but are just not effective in a real work environment.

There needs to be a testing and tracking process so that unsafe devices can be eliminated quickly once they are proven unsafe with repeated use in the actual workplace.

I am also aware that while IV devices are the most likely to lead to blood borne infections being spread there are many other sharps in use that are equally contaminated and easily as dangerous to staff.

There is a need for more education around sharps related injuries and the risks involved

Thank you for evaluating my concerns and adding them to the public forum on the proposed amendments to the sharps legislation. Andrea Allen, RN

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