Accidental blood exposure: risk and prevention in interventional radiology

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing concern about the transmission of bloodborne pathogens during medical procedures among health care workers and patients. Over the last three decades, radiological services have undergone many changes with the introduction of new modalities. One of these new disciplines is interventional radiology (IR) which deals with procedures such as arteriography, image-guided biopsies, intravascular catheter insertions, angioplasty and stent placements. Despite these developments, the potential for accidental blood exposure and exposure to other infectious material continues to exist. Therefore, it is important for all radiologists who perform invasive procedures to observe specific recommendations for infection control. In this review, we look at the different policies for protection and universal standards on infection control. © 2006 Biomedical Imaging and Intervention Journal. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Interventional radiology, bloodborne pathogens, prevention

INTRODUCTION

Blood borne pathogens are a definite threat to health care workers due to potential occupational exposure. Concern about Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV) and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) are rising in societies globally. This is especially true for interventional radiologists who perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures involving needles and catheters. Many practitioners have expressed the need for official statements regarding the issue of infection control and prevention unique to interventional radiology. The Society of Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology (SCVIR) Subcommittee on HIV and Bloodborne Pathogens was formed to review current knowledge on the risk of transmission during interventional procedures, to summarize regulations and formulate prevention policies [1]. The Guidelines for Prevention of Intravascular Catheter-Related Infections was developed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in 1996 and updated in 2002. These were developed for practitioners who insert catheters and health care workers.