HCV Is Viewed as the Current Biggest Risk for Healthcare Employees.

The transmission risk relating to HCV is not quite so high, but the health risks are far more serious, and for the foreseeable future, immunisation is not possible. Whilst HBV infections remain between constant and slightly declining, the rate of reported HCV cases increase year by year. This is further aggravated by the high rate of spontaneous mutations of the HC virus, which causes problems for the endogenic immune system.

HIV – The Sources of Danger Are Generally Known.

There is less risk of transmission with HIV. HIV patients are usually known in clinics. The risks can therefore be catered for. Immunisation in this case is also not available. The consequences of an infection are fatal, not to forget the enormous personal suffering of the infected person.

What Are the Chances of Recovery From a Disease?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Recovery</th>
<th>Chronic liver infections</th>
<th>Liver cirrhosis</th>
<th>Cancer of the liver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HBV</td>
<td>90 %</td>
<td>5 - 10 %</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>0,60 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCV</td>
<td>15 - 20 %</td>
<td>75 - 85 %</td>
<td>10 - 15 %</td>
<td>1 - 5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>Varying course of the disease</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where Do the Accidents Occur?

- Patient’s room: 66 %
- Operat. theatre/ intensive care: 9 %
- Laboratory: 6 %
- Other reasons: 19 %

Which Activities Cause the Most Injuries?

- Disposal: 27,0 %
- Whilst applying object as intended: 22,6 %
- Recapping: 3,9 %
- All other activities: 46,5 %

Needlesticks Are Not Trivial Incidents.

As shown in 23 studies from throughout the world, an employee suffers a needlestick or cut injury with a sharp object every 1 – 2 years.

The mentality “Nothing can happen to me”, is reflected directly in the total of registered injuries with risk potential. The report rate lies between 10% and 50%. Report rates amongst nursing staff are higher than amongst medical staff. Clearly these two occupational groups evaluate the risks differently.

The reasons for not reporting incidents were given as follows:

- Superficial injury: 35 %
- Sufficient Hepatitis immunisation: 18 %
- No time to make a report: 11 %
- Not familiar with report system: 10 %
- Nightshift/ weekend duty: 9 %
- Forgotten: 7 %
- Other reasons: 10 %

Source: Hasselborn, Hofmann et al Needlestick Injuries in hospital