



Effect of Safety Practices On Job Performance Of Health Care Workers In Enugu State University Teaching Hospital, Enugu, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to assess the effect of safety practices on job performance of health care workers in Enugu State University Teaching Hospital, Enugu. A total of 350 health care workers of the Enugu State University Teaching Hospital (ESUTH) were used for the cross sectional study which took place between February and August 2019. Basic information like age, sex and duration of work in the hospital were taken. Finally the effect of the safety practices on their job performance in the hospital was assessed. About 95.4% agree that adherence to safety practices like hand washing, draping, waste segregation and use of boots etc. have impact on the quality of their job performance. 98% agree that the use of personal protective equipment like gloves, face masks, etc. can reduce the risks of accident thereby improving job performance. 95.4% agreed that safety in hospitals reduce costs, and engender discipline in providing services and accountability of the health care workers. 96% believe that effective monitoring, inspection and evaluation of safety policies improve job performance. A very high proportion of the health care workers agreed that safety practices have a very good effect on their job performance. Likewise, a very good percentage agreed that use of personal protective equipments give them more confidence on the job and thereby improve their job performance. Monitoring and supervision of the implementation of these safety practices also lead to the sustainability of the improvement on job performance of the health care workers generally. This system has resulted in the very good quality services rendered in Enugu State University Teaching Hospital, Nigeria.

Keywords: Enugu State University Teaching Hospital, Safety practices, Job performance, Enugu Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Human resource is the most important asset for organizational development, as it uses other resources and gets best return out of them¹. Creating a safe working environment is rationally acceptable and neglecting safety in the workplace can cause a lot of damage and injury to the workforce. Increased injuries caused by the absence of or inadequate safety in the workplace will not only lead to the financial losses, but also to the loss of valuable human resources of the organization. It is, therefore, necessary that much more attention be paid to safety and occupational health than before². Hospital is among the highly important and sensitive work environments since the performance of employees in its workplace are associated with

the lives of thousands of people. Some studies have reported lack of safety in hospitals³. The hazards and incidents in this environment include: fire outbreak, electrical shock and burning due to it, burn injuries because of spill of acid on hands, skin or respiratory allergy to various chemicals used in hospitals, oxygen cylinder explosion as a result of overfilling, falling down and fractures of limbs or death of employees after falling from height, falling of patients out of their beds, burning in the operation room because of cautery device, busting of unprotected fluorescent light bulbs, and other frequent minor and major events³. Rosen et al. noted that establishing a strong safety culture is critical to improve the safety and to reduce adverse events⁴.

At every point in the growth and development of hospitals, we are reminded that the quality of care depends to a large extent on the quality of employees. One is also reminded of the need to motivate employees in order to produce the desired productivity³. Although the benefits of effective health and safety management have been well documented⁵, some organizations especially those in developing countries like Nigeria still aim at maintaining or increasing productivity and profitability at the expense of employee health and safety thereby reducing employee job performance. With increasing hospital acquired diseases and exposure to dangerous chemicals with their accompanying health implications for employees and others, the issue of health and safety management has become more pressing than ever.

A safety management system is a comprehensive management system designed to manage safety elements in the workplace. It is used to manage significant safety risks in various industries. It provides a systematic way to identify hazards and control risks while maintaining assurance that the measures put in place are effective. A safety management system sets goals, plans, and measures performance⁶. The safety climate in hospitals is effective on some issues such as medication errors, nurse back injuries, urinary tract infections, patient satisfaction, patients' perception of the responsiveness of nurses, and nurse satisfaction⁵. The relationship between safety in the work places and commitment of the staff was demonstrated by Butt et al; this in turn has an overall effect on the job performance of the staff⁷.

A report by McCaughey et al, showed the role of perception of safe environment with job satisfaction and job stress among the employees in the workplace⁸. The quality of working life of the employees was shown to affect their performance⁹. Safe working environment was shown to influence the improvement of efficiency of the personnel¹³.

A relationship was found between social atmosphere of an organization and quality of life of the personnel¹⁰. A research work carried out by Pollitt et al, pin-pointed leadership and managerial resilience as key drivers of health and safety performance¹¹. The author noted that the key to the success of any health and safety management system rests on management's drive towards making safety of practical value throughout the organization rather than one that was simply talked about.

A study was conducted on "impact of health and safety management on employee safety at the Ghana ports and harbour authority".¹² The purpose of this study was to examine the Safety and Health Management Systems (SHMS) implemented by the Ghana ports and harbour authority, assess the effectiveness of these measures in reducing accidents and death; and evaluate impact of accidents and work-related illnesses on the employee safety at work and their performance.

A report by McCaughey et al, showed the role of perception of safe environment with job satisfaction and job stress among the employees in the workplace⁸. The quality of working life of the employees was shown to affect their performance⁹. Safe working environment was shown to influence the improvement of efficiency of the personnel¹³. A relationship was found between social atmosphere of an organization and quality of life of the personnel¹⁰. A research by Hudson, said that health and safety promotion at the workplace has direct positive impact on employees' performance¹⁴

MATERIALS AND METHOD

A total of 350 health care workers comprising of 50 workers selected from each of the following seven departments in the teaching hospital; clinical medicine, surgery, nursing, medical laboratory, works, pharmacy and physiotherapy were used for the study. After obtaining an ethical clearance from the hospital ethical committee and an additional permission from the heads of departments of each of the

departments mentioned, a pretested self-administered questionnaire was used to collect information from each of the respondents. The questionnaires were prepared by referring to the recommended safety practices within the hospital and made in such a way that it would be very simple to understand. It was in English language and divided into three sections. The first section collected demographic data from the respondents excluding their names; the second section assessed their knowledge of the safety facilities available to them in the hospital while the third section dwelt on the effect of the safety practices on their job performance. The data was analyzed using the statistical package for social statistics (SPSS) version 11 and the results were displayed in the form of tables and graphs.

Table 1: Socio demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Below 25	39	11.1
26 - 35yrs	143	40.9
36 - 45yrs	115	32.9
46 - 55yrs	42	12.0
Above 56yrs	11	3.1
Total	350	100.0
Gender		
Male	159	45.4
Female	191	54.6
Total	350	100.0
How long have you been employed		
Below 6 months	34	9.7
6 months to 1 year	58	16.6
1 - 5 years	123	35.1
5 - 10years	101	28.9
Above 10 years	34	9.7
Total	350	100.0
Indicate the department you work in		
Clinical medicine	50	14.3
Pharmacy	50	14.3
Medical laboratory	50	14.3
Surgery	50	14.3
Works	50	14.3
Physiotherapy	50	14.3
Nursing	50	14.3
Total	350	100.0

The above table shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents with the age group (26-35 years) having the highest frequency (40.9%). being, 54.6% of the respondents are females and a greater number of respondents have worked in the hospital between 1-5 years (35.1%).

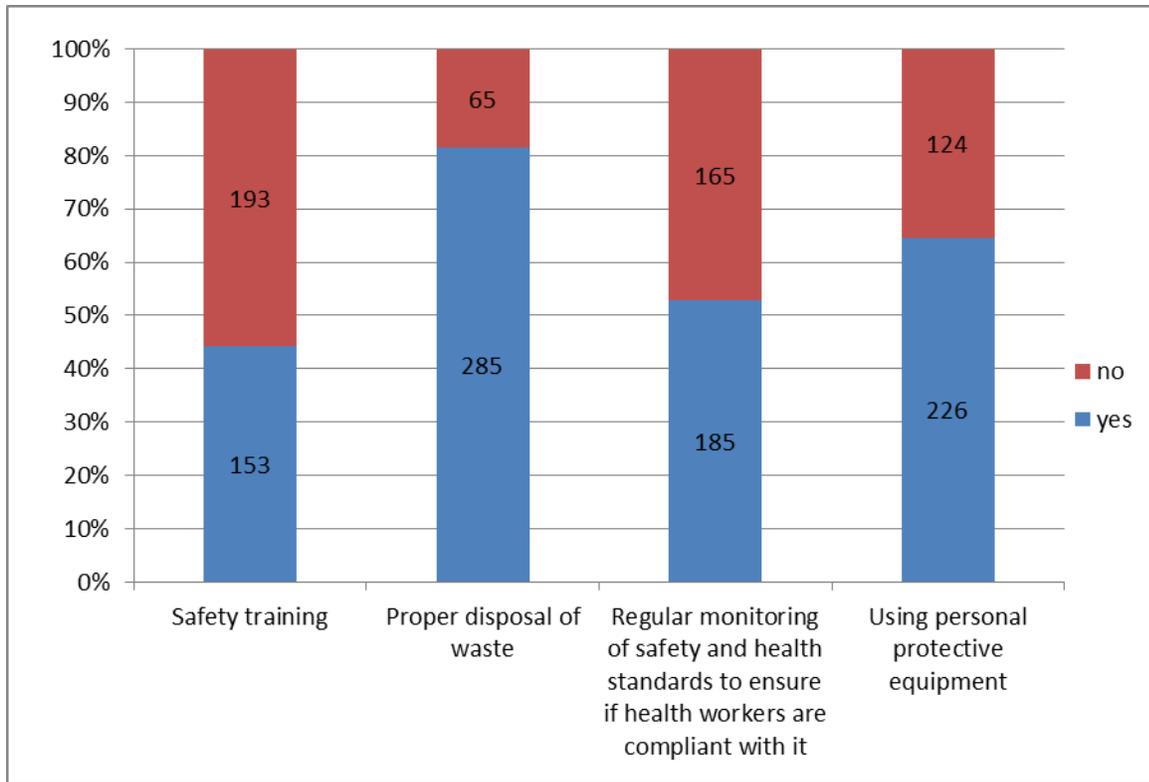


Figure 1: Safety measures put in place in ESUT teaching hospital

193 (55.8%) of the respondents do not believe that there is effective safety training in the hospital. 285 (81.4%) believe that there is proper disposal of wastes. 185 (52.8%) agreed that there is regular monitoring of safety and health standards to ensure health workers are compliant with it. Lastly 226 (64.6 %) agreed that there was good use of personal protective equipments by the workforce.

Table 2; Effects of safety practices on job performance

Variable	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Does adherence to safety practices like, hand washing draping, waste segregation and use of boots etc have any impact on the quality of your job performance?		
Yes	334	95.4
No	6	1.7
Don't know	10	2.9
Total	350	100.0
Does use of personal protective equipments like gloves, face masks, etc improve workers' safety and job performance?		
Yes	343	98.0
No	7	2.0
Total	350	100.0
If yes, how?		
A) Reduces accidents		
Yes	154	44.0
No	196	56.0
B) Reduces the rate of hospital transmitted infections		
Yes	236	67.4
No	114	32.6
Does safety in hospitals reduce costs; engender discipline in providing services and accountability of the health care workers?		
Yes	334	95.4
No	16	4.6
Total	350	100.0
Does effective monitoring, inspection and evaluation of the safety practices improve adherence to safety practices and job performances?		
Yes	336	96.0
No	14	4.0

95.4% believe that adherence to safety practices like hand washing, draping, waste segregation and use of boots improve their job performance. 98% feel that the use of personal protective equipment like gloves, face masks, etc. can improve workers' safety and job performance, while 95.4% hold the view that safety in hospitals reduce costs and improve job performance. 96% think that effective monitoring, inspection and evaluation of safety practices improve adherence to safety practices and job performance.

DISCUSSION

The study was carried out using a sample size of 350 respondents which had 45.4% of males and 54.6% of females. The greatest number of respondents had been working in the hospital for 1 to 5 years (Table 1) due to the fact that the hospital had just been in existence for 10 years and it has been building up its workforce gradually. Figure 1 shows that a good number of respondents believe that the hospital has a good waste management system, adequate provision of personal protective equipment and regular monitoring of health and safety standards but the health institution was rated poor in safety training. Table 2 indicates that 95.4% of the respondents agree that adherence to safety practices like, hand washing, draping, waste segregation and use of boots etc have a good impact on the quality of their job performance. Also 98% of the respondents agree that use of personal protective equipments like gloves, face masks, etc improve workers' safety and job performance. This is in agreement with the work done by

McCaughey et al. which showed the role of perception of safe environment with job satisfaction and job stress among the employees in the workplace¹⁵. The quality of working life of the employees was shown to affect their performance¹⁷. Safe working environment was shown to influence the improvement of efficiency of the personnel¹⁸. It also agrees with the work done by Hudson which found that health and safety promotion at the workplace has direct positive impact on employees' performance²⁸. Furthermore, 96% of respondents hold the view that effective monitoring, inspection and evaluation of the safety practices improve adherence to safety practices and job performance. Since the function of carrying out monitoring, inspection and evaluation is done by the management, this is in agreement with the research work carried out by Pollitt et al, which pin-pointed leadership and managerial resilience as key drivers of health and safety performance²¹. In their work, the authors noted that the key to the success of any health and safety management system rests on management's drive towards making safety of practical value throughout the organization rather than one that was simply talked about.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted in a teaching hospital which has just been in existence for about 10 years. Most of the workers were predominantly young and majority of them had served in the institution for a period less than 5 years. The issue of health and safety of the workers in a hospital of this nature is very important so as to establish a baseline level which can be used to compare future findings in this area. The findings show that the hospital is doing well in the provision of health and safety facilities for its workforce. There is however room for improvement in the area of provision of regular training and retraining of workers on health and safety. Regarding the effect of the safety practices on the job performance of the workers, there is general belief by the workers that the standard of safety procedures provided for them has a good effect on their job performance. Consequently efforts would have to be concentrated on not only maintaining the standard already achieved, but also to continue to improve with new innovations in this area. This is more indicated now that the world is being faced with emerging and re-emerging pandemics like HIV/AIDS which put the hospital workers at very great risk

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