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## **AOHP Publishes “*Proven Strategies to Prevent Bloodborne Pathogen Exposures in EXPO-S.T.O.P. Hospitals*”**

The *Journal* of the Association of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare (AOHP) recently published in their Winter 2017 edition (March 2017) the results of its member-survey which ascertained their most effective strategies to reduce sharps injuries and mucocutaneous blood exposures (BE) among their hospital staff.

AOHP's EXPO-S.T.O.P. (**EXPO**sure **S**urvey of **T**rends in **O**ccupational **P**ractice) was established as a nationally representative blood exposure database and benchmark resource and has completed its fifth consecutive annual survey. A 22-item electronic survey for 2015 calendar year data was developed and distributed to AOHP members nationally and 181 hospitals responded with data suitable for inclusion. In addition to surveying AOHP members for their BE incidence rates, the authors, Dr Linda Good and Terry Grimmond, determined the “Top 5” facilities with the lowest BE incidence rates, and interviewed them to ascertain what were their strategies that brought about such marked reductions.

“With an incidence of 320,000 annually, BE among healthcare workers continues to be a serious occupational risk that healthcare facilities strive to reduce,” explains Dr Linda Good, Manager, Occupational Health Services, Scripps Health, San Diego. “EXPO-S.T.O.P. has identified health care organizations with exposure rates nearly 50% below the national average. Analyzing their successful prevention strategies serves as a foundation for creative and effective best practices to reduce the persistent national problem of blood and body fluid exposures.”

“Our analysis documents that, by using these proven successful strategies, sharps injuries *are* preventable,” says co-author Terry Grimmond, Director, Grimmond and Associates, New Zealand. “These best-practice strategies can be grouped into four categories: education and training (in use of safety engineered devices); communication; incident investigation; and staff engagement.”

The EXPO-S.T.O.P. study also identified that, with a commitment to consistent prevention practices, even high risk areas such as the Operating Room (OR) can be made safer. Applying the Hierarchy of Exposure Controls (eliminate use of sharps; use engineering controls; administrative controls; workplace controls; use personal protective equipment), will lessen the risk of blood exposure.

"The over-arching theme in each of the EXPO-S.T.O.P. Exposure Aware facilities," explains Grimmond, "is a culture of safety that is practiced at all levels of the organization, with zero incidence being the goal."

AOHP is a national association representing thousands of healthcare workers whose vision is to be the defining resource and leading advocate for occupational health and safety in healthcare. AOHP promotes health, safety and well-being for healthcare workers through: advocating for employee health and safety; occupational health education and networking opportunities; health and safety advancement through best practice and research; and partnering with employers, regulatory agencies and related associations.

For more information, contact Annie Wiest, AOHP Executive Director, at 800-362-4347, or e-mail [info@aohp.org](mailto:info@aohp.org). Copies of the article are available to non-AOHP members by contacting [info@aohp.org](mailto:info@aohp.org) or [download order form](#).

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