OCCUPATIONAL INFECTIONS

The most common occupational infections of concern in the health sector are tuberculosis, hepatitis B and C, HIV/AIDS and respiratory infections (coronaviruses, influenza).

Key facts

- Needlestick injuries contribute to 39%, 37% and 4.4% of hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HIV infections respectively.
- The prevalence of acute hepatitis B infection among health workers globally is 5.3%.
- About 54% of health workers in low- and middle-income countries have latent TB infection.

Preventive measures:

- Adhere to strict infection prevention and control measures.
- Observe standard precautions for infection control - hand washing, respiratory hygiene, safe collection and disposal of health-care waste, environmental hygiene and use of personal protective equipment.
- Use safety-engineered devices and follow good practices for safe injections.
- Provide immunization at no cost to health workers. WHO recommendations on health workers’ vaccinations include Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG), hepatitis B, polio, pertussis, diphtheria, measles, rubella, meningococcal, influenza, varicella, COVID-19 and cholera.
- Provide health services for early detection, diagnosis, treatment, counselling and rehabilitation for HIV and TB.
- Provide systematic latent TB infection testing and treatment for health workers in countries with a low TB incidence.
- Ensure adequate ventilation in all indoor health-care settings.
- Consider the use of ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) for disinfection and prevention of airborne pathogens.
- Use clinical triage for early identification of patients with respiratory infections to prevent transmission.
- Ensure adequate supply, proper use and maintenance of well fitted personal protective equipment.

Source:
https://www.who.int/tools/occupational-hazards-in-health-sector/occupational-infections