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NEWS RELEASE



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WORKPLACE SAFETY AND NEEDLESTICK INJURIES ARE TOP CONCERNS FOR NURSES

SILVER SPRING, MD – The American Nurses Association (ANA) today announced the findings of the 2008 Study of Nurses’ Views on Workplace Safety and Needlestick Injuries, an independent nationwide survey of more than 700 nurses. According to the latest research, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of U.S. nurses say needlestick injuries and blood borne infections remain major concerns, and 55 percent believe their workplace safety climate negatively impacts their own personal safety.

“An overwhelming majority of nurses (87 percent) say safety concerns influence their decisions about the type of nursing they do and their continued practice in the field. This study exemplifies the serious concerns expressed by nurses across the country. Concerns that may prompt nurses to leave the bedside, exacerbating the growing nurse shortage. To enhance the safety climate of all healthcare workers, improvements need to be made to the workplace environment and staffing levels,” said ANA President Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR.

Workplace Safety Climate

According to the study, the vast majority of nurses (89 percent) say increasing workloads and workplace stress levels (84 percent) impact workplace safety. When asked how their employer ranks key issues, 35 percent of nurses perceive patient care and organizational reputation as first, followed by patient safety, infection control, healthcare worker safety and staff productivity.

Illustrating scenarios that could potentially increase errors in the workplace, the majority of nurses surveyed (59 percent) say that when pressure mounts, they feel the need to work faster, even if it means taking shortcuts.

Results of the survey underscore the reality of nurses’ stereotypical self-sacrificing nature. When asked if they put patient care first before their own personal safety at work, the vast majority of nurses (82 percent) say “yes.”

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Needlestick Injuries

Sixty-four percent of nurses report being accidentally stuck by a needle while working. This mirrors findings from the 2006 Study of Needlestick Injuries and Safety Devices. Although in 2008, 75 percent report being stuck by a standard (non-safety) syringe, and in 2006, the figure was 85 percent.

Among those nurses reporting needlestick injuries, a staggering 74 percent have been stuck by a contaminated needle while working. This figure is virtually identical to the 2006 study in which 73 percent claimed to have experienced a contaminated needlestick. In 2008, more than one-third (35 percent) reported two or more contaminated needlesticks over the course of their career.

When asked how nurses attained their most recent needlestick injuries, the top three responses include: while giving an injection (28 percent); before activating the safety feature (19 percent); and during the disposal of a non-safety device (19 percent).

Underreporting of Needlestick Injuries

While the overwhelming majority of nurses (91 percent) are familiar with their workplace's protocol regarding needlestick injuries, 79 percent of those accidentally stuck by a needle while working say they reported the incident, compared to 83 percent in 2006.

Although the vast majority (86 percent) of nurses believe their department strongly encourages and supports the reporting of needlestick injuries, nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of nurses believe needlesticks are still underreported, down from 86 percent reported in 2006.

Evaluations and Treatment after Needlestick Injuries

Nearly half (46 percent) of those who have been stuck say, during their most recent needlestick injury, they received an evaluation or were treated within one to two hours; yet more than one-third (39 percent) state they were not evaluated or treated at all. Nine percent say they were treated within four hours; two percent within the first eight hours; three percent the next day; and one percent more than 24 hours afterwards.

Ninety-five percent of nurses report taking a Hepatitis B vaccine to protect them from Hepatitis B infection due to occupational exposure.

Availability of Safety Syringes

Illustrating the improved availability of safety syringes, only three percent of nurses say safety syringes are not available in their healthcare facility, compared to seven percent in 2007.

According to survey respondents, the types of safety syringes available in their healthcare facility include: manually retractable syringes (57 percent), retro-fitted syringes (49 percent) and automatically retractable syringes (37 percent). Nurses' preferences for safety syringes include:

- No preference as long as it is a safety syringe (41 percent)
- Automatically retractable syringe (34 percent)
- Manually retractable syringe (14 percent)
- Retro-fitted syringe with add-on piece (5 percent)
- Do not prefer to use safety syringe (3 percent)
- Prefer to try something new (3 percent)

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How to Improve Safety Syringes

In 2006, 96 percent of nurses surveyed said there was room for improvement in the design of safety syringes. Similarly, in 2007, 95 percent believed design improvements were needed; and in 2008, 94 percent state there still is room for improvement.

Nurses nationwide say they would improve the design of current safety syringes by:

	2008	2007	2006
Hands and fingers stay behind the needle when activating the safety mechanism	64 percent	65 percent	71 percent
Safety feature activated using one hand	63 percent	73 percent	N/A
Syringe is permanently disabled after the safety mechanism is activated	62 percent	69 percent	72 percent
Needle withdraws into the barrel	57 percent	63 percent	63 percent
Safety feature is integral to the design of the syringe	49 percent	61 percent	64 percent
No add-on pieces such as sheaths, shields or caps	40 percent	45 percent	59 percent

Although the 2000 Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act (NSPA), adopted as public law 106-430 by the 106th Congress, mandates that institutions conduct annual product reviews and that nurses be involved in the decision-making process, two-thirds (66 percent) of nurses state they do not have the opportunity to influence the selection of sharps safety devices in their workplace, compared to 58 percent in 2007 and 57 percent in 2006.

“This study spotlights cause for concern when those individuals most susceptible to on-the-job needlestick injuries are not a part of the selection and evaluation process for sharps safety devices,” says Gareth Clarke, chief executive officer of Inviro Medical Devices. “Yet, we know that 74 percent of the nurses surveyed say they would not consider working for an employer which does not provide safety syringes.”

An Ounce of Knowledge

While enrolled in their nursing education program, three-quarters (75 percent) of nurses say they were provided with knowledge and skills regarding needlestick injury prevention. Even so, the majority of nurses (62 percent) believe it would be beneficial to receive more information about needlestick injury prevention. More than one-quarter (29 percent) say they are not familiar with the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act of 2001.

Advocacy for Safety in the Workplace

The importance of a partnership is reflected in the fact that more than two-thirds (68 percent) of nurses say they share the responsibility to advocate for workplace safety with their healthcare employer. Twenty-nine percent state they are their own primary advocate, and three percent say their employer alone is responsible.

Other Health and Safety Issues

This study reveals the vast majority of nurses (86 percent) support universal healthcare, similar to a recent study conducted by Indiana University School of Medicine, in which more than half (59 percent) of U.S. doctors said they support legislation to establish national health insurance.

Illustrating the impact of “going green” on the healthcare industry, nearly all nurses (97 percent) say they would be inclined to recommend a safety syringe offering environmentally friendly solutions compared to competitive products if the safety syringe created less medical waste.

About the Survey

Conducted in April, the 2008 Study of Nurses’ Views on Workplace Safety and Needlestick Injuries is based on an online, nationwide survey of nurses. The study is sponsored by the American Nurses Association, with support provided by Inviro Medical Devices.

Designed to capture opinions, concerns and experiences about the workplace safety climate and needlestick injuries sustained by nurses, this year’s study was developed and co-sponsored by ANA and Inviro Medical Devices (www.inviromedical.com). For complete research results, please visit

<http://nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/OccupationalandEnvironmental/occupationalhealth/OccupationalResources/2008SafetyandNeedlestickStudy.aspx>

- 32 percent have been a nurse for one to five years
- 12 percent have been nurses for six to 10 years
- 8 percent have been a nurse for 11 to 15 years
- 48 percent have been nurses for more than 15 years

The survey’s margin of error is plus or minus 3 percent.

The survey findings build upon those captured from last year’s 2007 Study of Injectable Medication Errors, also co-sponsored by ANA and Inviro Medical; and those from the 2006 Study of Needlestick Injuries and Safety Devices, which surveyed nurses, as well as directors of infection control, and was sponsored by Inviro Medical Devices.

About American Nurses Association

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its 54 constituent member nurses’ associations. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.

About Inviro Medical Devices

Founded in 1988, [Inviro Medical Devices](http://www.inviromedical.com) engineers and markets safe medication delivery systems, including the patented InviroSNAP!® with InviroSTRIPE® Safety Syringe, a manually retractable safety syringe with an integral write-on stripe that allows critical information to be recorded directly onto the syringe barrel. After years of research to develop its patents and refine its product designs, the company is addressing the growing \$1.6 billion safety syringe market and introducing its breakthrough infection control technology in North America. Headquartered in Atlanta, Inviro Medical Devices is becoming a leading industry champion in the quest to increase infection control awareness and to protect healthcare workers, patients and the environment with innovative medical devices. For more information, visit www.inviromedical.com.

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Editor’s Note - Camera-ready charts and graphs of key findings from the 2008 Study of Nurses’ Views on Workplace Safety and Needlestick Injuries are available by contacting Media Contacts listed on page 1.