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SAFETY MATTERS Newsletter

Presented By:
Thomas McGee, L.C.

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# Product Failure = Injury Potential

***By: John Juresic, Loss Control Consultant, Thomas McGee, L.C.***

I probably watch a little more television than I should. But, there is one insurance commercial that has a tag line that I love, and it goes like this: "We know a thing or two, because we've seen a thing or two." As I look over my varied loss control career, I can say that I resemble that tag line. One of my favorite activities in the past was being involved with product liability loss control. I had many opportunities to evaluate many medical items and devices that ranged from supports and splints, to autoclaves.

Medical devices fall under the umbrella of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. With that note, the manufacturer has a number of guidelines that they must follow; from design and engineering to manufacturing to quality control, marketing, legal support, record keeping, handling and reporting of problems with the device, etc. Yet each year, defective, faulty or misused products cause injuries that range from minor to serious. And those injuries can happen with our residents as well as long term healthcare employees.

When those injuries do occur, conducting a quality investigation can assist in determining if there is a problem with the product which must warrant notifying the distributor and manufacturer. Many of these incidents can be avoided if manufacturers or distributors review the complaints and feedback from their customers. Such information can help a company take positive steps at an early stage to minimize or avoid product issues and exposures. Making it easy for the end consumer to share their concerns can help companies respond to consumer satisfaction needs, and create increased opportunities for improving their products.

These findings underscore the need for ongoing attention to strategies to reduce such injuries in a systematic way and to improve reporting systems so that appropriate medical care can be delivered. Especially with a lifetime of risks for long term healthcare workers contracting serious blood borne diseases.

In many cases, our employees provide care to insulin dependent diabetics who are unable to give their own injections. In spite of new safety devices for needle stick protection with insulin syringes, long term healthcare employees may still obtain a needle stick injury. Although the insulin syringes have small bore needles, the rate of small bore needle stick injury continues to be under-reported by healthcare employees because perception exists that needle stick injuries are an inherent occupational risk.

### *Editor's Note:*

*The KING Safety Matters newsletter is published monthly to provide general safety information. It is not a substitute for adequate safety training, or intended to provide complete safety information or training, on any specific subject. The information contained herein is intended to assist safety efforts, and increase safety awareness.*

*In order to ensure the contents of the newsletter are helpful and important to you, please feel free to send comments, suggestions and feedback to:*

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## Pros and Cons of Different Types of Syringes.

*Table 1: Types of insulin Syringes – Pros and Cons*

| Type of Insulin Syringes | Pros | Cons |
|---|---|---|
| Regular syringe without safety features | Ease of use<br>Commonly used by patients in home setting<br>Patients are familiar with its use | No safety device<br>No retractable sleeve to prevent needle sticks<br>Needle can be reused by patient |
| Syringe with retractable sleeve | An approved method for patient and healthcare worker (HCW) safety<br>Re-engineered safety mechanism that provides some safety features to protect from needlestick injury | Sleeve obstructs the view of number of units if dosing is below 40 units<br>May not be able to pull sleeve and put in place properly<br>Sleeve can be easily pulled off and not used by HCW or patient<br>Sleeve can be pulled back and the needle reused |
| Snap-safety (Inviro) syringe | No obstruction to see numbers for proper dosing<br>Disposal is easy<br>Cannot be reused | New to market place, just introduced<br>Input about device from patients and HCW not yet available |
| Insulin pens | Easy to use once trained<br>Excellent for children<br>Dose is easy to calculate<br>Easy to transport | May have needlestick injury when changing small needles<br>Cost is higher than syringes<br>Disposable expensive, reusable – some only allow one type of supply compared with inter-changeable cartridges |
| Needleless injectors | No needle for an injury to occur | Patient compliance difficult |

Chart from: http://www.jurispro.com/uploadArticles/Korniewicz-Syringe.pdf

Risks to long term healthcare workers are rising because of the changing demographics of residents. Clearly, there is much room for improvement in protecting the healthcare workers from needle stick injury, which can be accomplished through a comprehensive program that addresses behavioral and device-related factors that contribute to the occurrence of these injuries. Apart from this, greater collaborative efforts by all stakeholders are needed to prevent such injuries and the tragic consequences that can result.

**Sources:**

www.FDA.gov
www.consumerwatch.com
www.usmedicalinstruments.com
www.jurispro.com