



Medical Waste in Traditional Medicine: A Neglected Issue

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(Received 11 Aug 2019; accepted 26 Aug 2019)

Dear Editor-in-Chief

Medical wastes are hazardous waste produced through diagnosis and treatment process in health facilities (1). It includes infectious, non-infectious and sharp materials. Poor management of medical wastes will led to undesirable effects for health providers and environment (2, 3).

Nowadays, there has been a growing interest in traditional medicine (TM) using in both developed and developing countries (4). Traditional medicine was defined as “the knowledge, skills and practices based on theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, used in the maintenance of health and in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness”(5). Different methods of traditional medicine are common in various countries influenced by the culture, religion, geographic area and environment. Literature has reported various statistics about TM using in countries from 40% of all health care delivered in China to 71% in Chile. However, 48% of the population in Australia, 49% in France and 42% in the United States has used TM at least once (4).

TM processes such as Leech therapy, cupping and phlebotomy produce infectious and non-infectious wastes, which must be managed effectively (6-8). Regarding that some TM providers did not adhere the sterilization standards, besides, mostly were not registered, their waste management is very poor. This is an issue, which is neglected, especially in low and middle-income countries with high level of TM usage.

It is suggested to researchers to investigate on this issue and explain the situation. Moreover, health system policymakers must develop a waste management act. However, as people in home or informal facilities mostly use TM, popularization of these wastes safety knowledge could be useful.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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