Student Health & Safety Policies

—These policies apply to all School of Medicine students.—

Blood-Borne Pathogens Policy

In 1992, the Executive Faculty of the School of Medicine formally adopted a Medical Campus policy on human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis B virus (HBV) infections. This policy was updated in 2001 to include hepatitis C virus (HCV) infections. The purpose of the policy is to provide guidelines to prevent or reduce the transmission of these infectious agents between patients and health care workers. It is an ethical and moral obligation for students/employees to report blood-borne pathogen infections.

The policy deals with the following: (1) the university's responsibilities to infected patients, including obligation to treat, confidentiality, and appropriate serologic testing; (2) appropriate health and safety precautions and procedures for faculty, students and staff, including compliance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, blood and body fluid precautions, and handling of needles or sharp instruments; and (3) the university's responsibilities to faculty, staff or students who are infected with HIV, HBV or HCV, including admission to medical school, participation in clinical rotations, serologic testing confidentiality, and medical treatment.

The policy makes a distinction between Category I activities (those involving no risk of transmission from infected health care workers to patients, such as routine history/physical examinations, minor surface suturing, and elective phlebotomy), Category II activities (those for which blood-borne virus transmission is theoretically possible but unlikely, such as minor local procedures, central venous lines, and other specialty procedures), and Category III activities (those for which there is a definite risk of blood-borne virus transmission, such as general surgery, cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery, and other surgeries as well as non-elective procedures performed in the emergency department).

In 2012, a committee was formed that included representation from Administration, Legal – Risk Management, Infectious Disease, Occupational Health, and Student Health Services. The Student Health Services director meets with infected students and discusses the need for restricted activities and proper follow-up.

Needlestick Injuries and Other Blood-Borne and/or Body Fluid Pathogen Exposure Policy

Principles

This policy involves the education of medical students about methods of exposure prevention; procedures for care and treatment after exposure; definitions of financial responsibility in care and treatment; and the effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on learning.

Policy

1. Students are introduced to the concept of infection control and work-related exposure during their first year of medical school. Education and training regarding exposures will be updated annually throughout the medical school.
2. Students, including visiting students, must contact the School of Medicine’s Student Health Services (https://studenthealth.med.wustl.edu/) between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, to report an exposure to blood and/or bodily fluid. The main contact number is 314-362-3523, and the after-hours contact number is 314-871-2966.
3. There are standardized protocols for exposures at the School of Medicine that involve exposure to HIV, HBV, and HCV.
4. The financial coverage of the evaluation and treatment is fully covered by Student Health Services.
5. Students who are infected with any other potentially transmissible disease will not be excluded from participating in patient care activities or restricted in their access to patient care services or facilities because of their health status, unless medically based judgments in individual cases establish that exclusion or restriction is appropriate for the welfare of patients, the welfare of other members of the patient care community, or the welfare of the individual student.

Procedures

1. Needle-stick/blood-borne pathogen exposures are included in a mandatory policy attestation process for students.
2. Information about this policy is included on cards distributed during orientation week.
3. The blood and body fluid exposure training video is available for students to complete during their clinical orientation. The Office of Medical Student Education (https://md.wustl.edu/resources/offices-and-contacts/medical-student-education/) directs students to the training video located on Keystone (https://mykeystone.wustl.edu/) and tracks attestation.
4. During orientation to the clerkship rotations, clerkship directors will review the policy with students. Effective 2022, the students will also re-attest to understanding the policy prior to the onset of their clerkships. The Office of
Medical Student Education (https://md.wustl.edu/resources/offices-and-contacts/medical-student-education/) directs students to the training video located on Keystone (https://mykeystone.wustl.edu/) (Phase 2 Curriculum Resources > Re-entry Clinical Orientation) and tracks attestation.

5. Always wear Personal Protective Equipment!

**Individuals exposed to the blood or body fluid of a patient should follow the guidelines below:**

1. Immediately following an exposure to blood:
   - Wash needle sticks and cuts with soap and water.
   - Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water.
   - Irrigate eyes with clean water or saline for 15 minutes.
2. Keep the source or patient available for HIV, HBV antigen, and HCV antibody testing.
3. Contact Student Health Services at 314-362-3523. After hours, call 314-871-2966, and listen carefully to the recorded instructions.

All exposures to human blood and body fluids are to be reported immediately to Student Health Services, which maintains a 24-hour reporting system.