

## Perception of Health Care Professionals about Fire Safety Measures in Tertiary Care Teaching Hospitals in Mangalore

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### Background

Hospitals have hundreds of patients, visitors and health care professionals who are at risk in case of a fire. Health care setups are particularly high risk zones for fires because of the chemicals, materials and other consumables used. Hospitals may be well equipped with all gears required to combat a fire emergency, but lack of knowledge among staff regarding its usage will prove it futile. All healthcare facilities must have a plan for the protection of all persons on their premises and for their evacuation from the building in case of fire. Recent fire accidents in two of the reputed tertiary care teaching hospitals in Mangalore and the ill-fated fire accident in AMRI Hospital, Kolkata have provoked the need for this study.

### Aims & Objectives

To determine the perception of health care professionals regarding fire safety measures, the application of their knowledge in case of fire and to determine the steps taken by the institution to prevent fire disaster.

### Material & Methods

A cross sectional study was done after distributing self-administered, semi-structured questionnaire among 105 health care professionals (which included doctors, nurses, lab technicians and post graduates with at least 1 year experience who had given their informed consent) in tertiary care teaching hospitals, i.e. Kasturba Medical College Attavara and Government Wenlock Hospital, Mangalore. The sampling was done using convenient

sampling method.

### Results

84% of the study participants have not witnessed a fire accident in the hospital. 69.4% of the individuals are aware of the fire escape route and only 59.5% of the individuals are aware of the correct number to be called on in case of fire emergencies. 67.6% of individuals are aware of the location of the nearest fire extinguishers and only 44.1% are aware of the nearest fire alarm. Majority (77%) of the participants have not been trained regarding fire safety. Majority of the participants (80.8%) in the private hospital said the patients would be relocated to an outside ground, courtyard or another hospital, whereas most (47.5%) of the participants in the Government Hospital had no idea with regard to relocation in case of fire. About 51% of the participants know how to operate a fire extinguisher, but less than half of them are aware of the right fire extinguisher for the different types of fires. Only 23% have received training regarding fire accidents. Of the participants who are aware of the mock fire drills being conducted in the hospital, only 9.9% attend them. 87% thought faults in the electrical system and inefficient checks of electrical safety is the cause of fire in hospitals. 37% recommend regular training for the staff regarding fire safety measures.

### Conclusions

The study revealed the adequate knowledge of health care professionals regarding guidelines to be followed in case of a fire and first aid for a burnt victim. It also brought to light, the lack of proper fire safety training and poor attendance of the mock drills conducted in the hospitals.