

## **Medical solid waste management status in Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract**

In Zimbabwe, management of medical solid waste is emerging as a visible dilemma. This is attributed to population explosion as well as outbreak of diseases and spread of already existing diseases which accelerate volume of medical solid waste generated by medical facilities. Consequently, the overarching objective of this paper was to review medical solid waste management status in Zimbabwe utilising published documents. The literature demonstrated that medical solid waste generated in Zimbabwe encompasses pathological, pharmaceutical, chemical, infectious, cytotoxic, sharps and general waste. Management approaches used by medical facilities are marred with inappropriateness as shown by storage, collection, conveyance and disposal of non-segregated waste. Verdicts of the study depict that open pit dumping, landfills, incineration, burying, open burning, ottoway pits and open dumpsites are discarding strategies used. However, these strategies pose water, air and soil pollution, therefore, impacting the ecosystem and humanity. Findings indicated that infectious diseases, respiratory diseases, gastro-intestinal problems and injuries emanate due to poor management of medical waste. The roots of unsafe management of medical solid waste include inadequate finance, weak enforcement of legislation, ignorance among health workers and waste workers as well as non-participatory approach in decision making. Zimbabwe is recommended to direct funds to medical solid waste, increase awareness of health workers through trainings and education and reinforcing enforcement of legislation linked to medical solid waste among others.