



Singapore Healthcare Management 2021

Needle Safety: Recapped needles observed in sharps disposal containers in research laboratories – Why?

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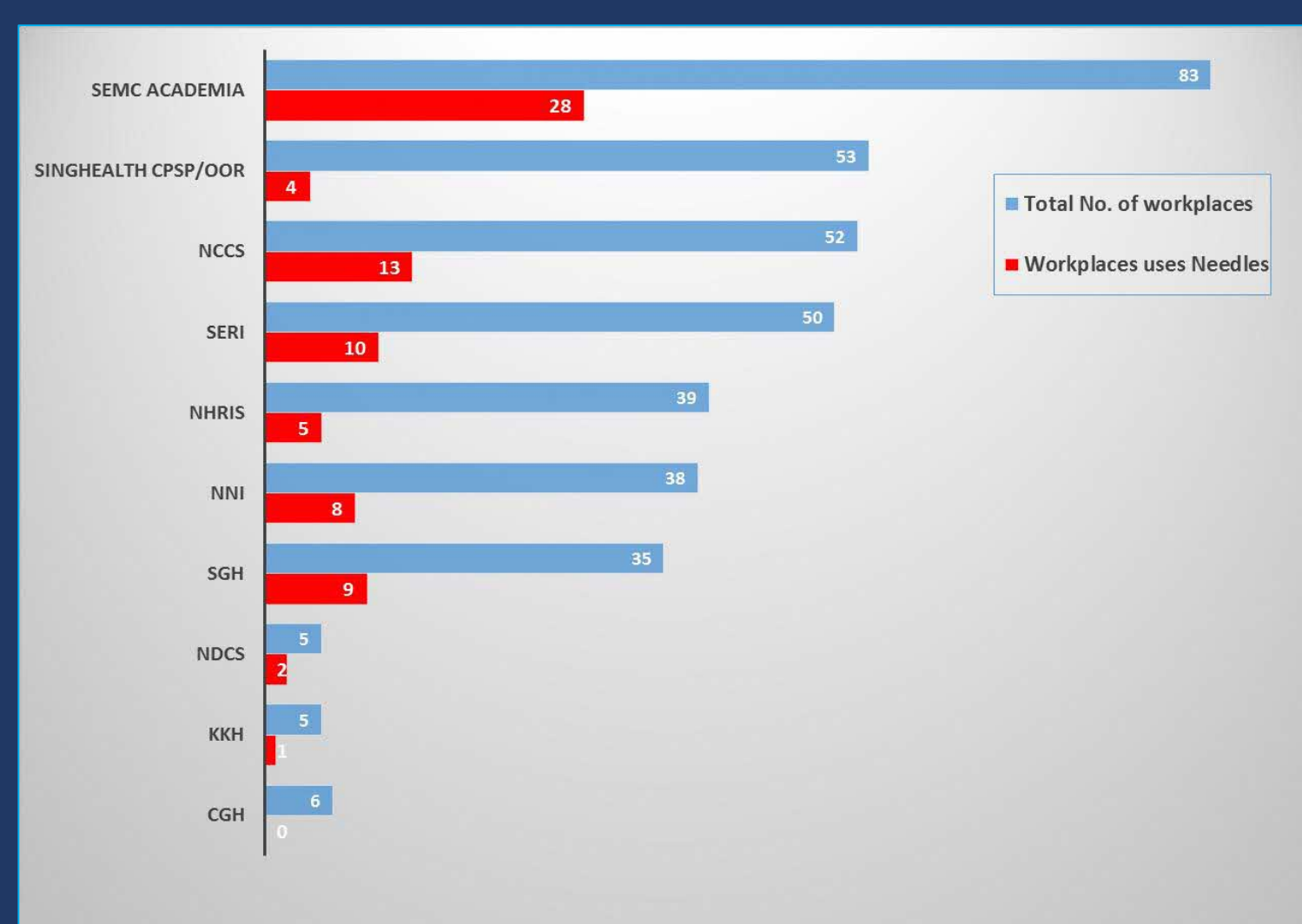
AIM

No recapping of used needles is a standard precautionary measure to prevent needle-stick injury (NSI), which is one of the highest category of incident reported in the research laboratories in SingHealth. But in the 2018 annual Workplace Environment, Health and Safety (WEHS) inspections, a significant number of recapped needles were observed in the sharps disposal containers. A needle safety workgroup was thus formed within the Office of Biosafety, to find out the reasons for the recapped needles in research laboratories.



METHODOLOGY

I. Risk assessments (RAs) for all SingHealth institutions research laboratories were reviewed to identify work activities requiring the use of needles.



22% Workplaces use needles

II. 'Sharps Bins' walkabouts across all SingHealth institutions' research laboratories were conducted to understand the actual situations on the ground for the use and disposal of needles.



42% Workplaces visited

III. OoB WEHS inspection checklist was revised to ensure all safety aspects on the use of needles were covered.

Checked items improved

Sharps		Location:
1.23	Are needles used in the workplace?	
1.24	Is risk assessment carried out for all work activities using needles?	
1.25	Needles are not recapped or bent manually.	
1.26	Are scalpel blades used with appropriate blade holder?	
1.27	Sharps are discarded completely in puncture-resistant containers accessible area	
1.28	Sharps containers are labeled and the indicated	

Safety Inspection Checklist revised on 21st Jan 2019

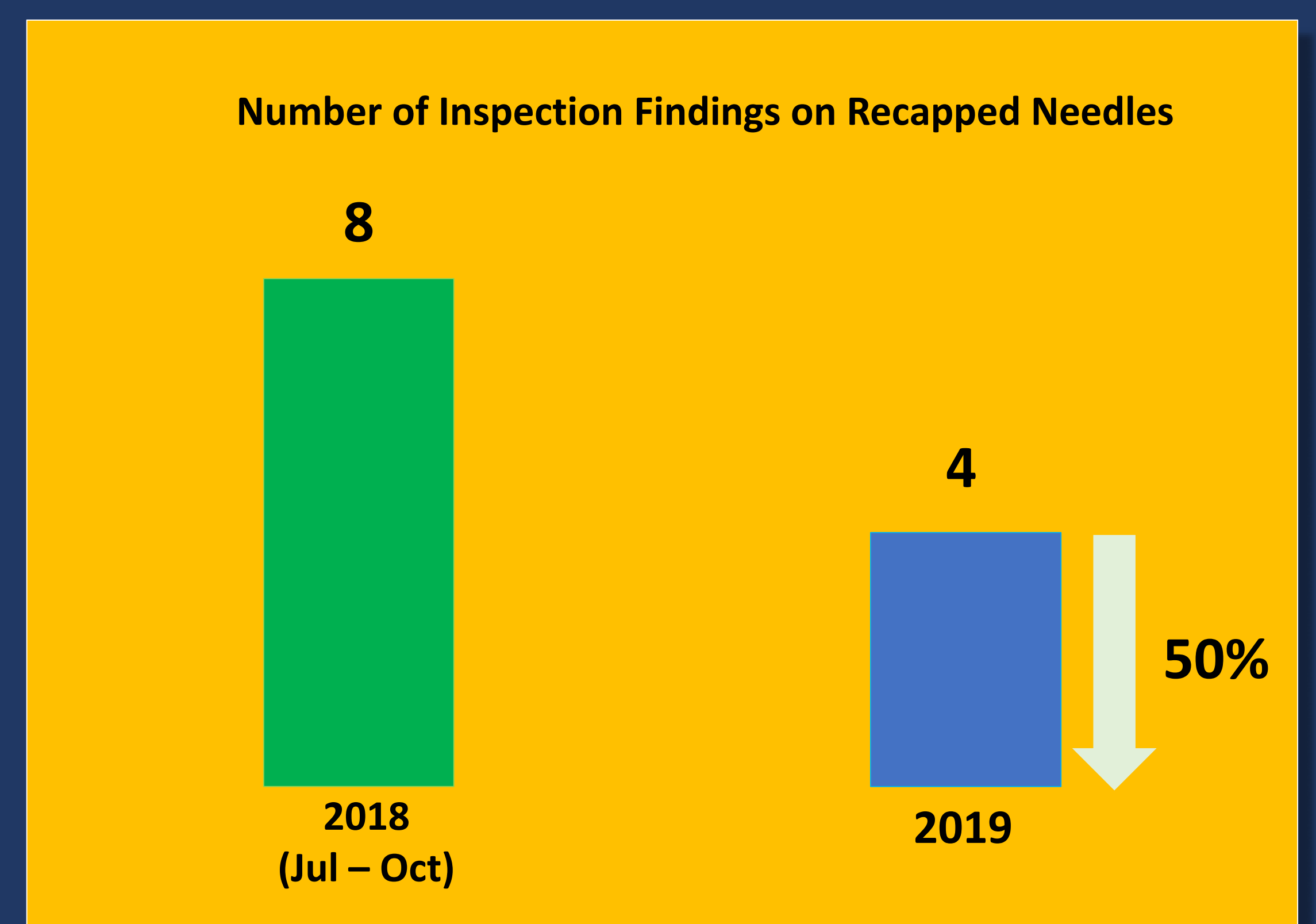
Workplace EHS Inspection Checklist SHS-GQPS-OoB-408 (Revision No. 3) 21/01/2019

RESULTS

25% Legacy sharps disposal containers with recapped needles were identified and discarded during the 'Sharps Bin' walkabout. This set a clean slate for the WEHS inspections of the research laboratories for 2019.



50% reduction in the number of WEHS inspection findings on recapped needles in the sharps disposal containers in 2019 as compared to 2018.



CONCLUSION

The implemented measures have shown improvement in reducing the number of recapped needles and it is the first step to establish a sustainable culture of safe handling of needles in the research community. OoB will continue to monitor the number of WEHS inspection findings on recapped needles in SingHealth Institutions research laboratories.

