

Hospital waste being dumped in the open, re

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LAHORE, May 2: Infectious hospital waste is being dumped in the open in different parts of the provincial metropolis in increasingly large quantities as the departments concerned fail to check the practice.

According to a recent survey by the district environment department, infectious hospital waste is being dumped in the Farrukhabad Shahdara, Mahmood Booti and Misri Shah Bund Road, Saggian Bridge and Kahna areas.

"Unscrupulous elements with the help of hospital's sanitary workers and drivers of the Solid Waste Management dump waste in these areas from where it is picked and provided to recycling units," said environment department officials.

"The units recycle and re-package the stuff. The re-packaged items are available in hospitals, especially in the public sector at cheaper rates," they said, urging the health department to immediately launch an investigation into the matter.

The infectious waste, including pathological waste, tissues, blood and blood products, surgical dressings, disposable gloves, pharmaceutical waste, cotton swabs and soiled dressings and waste from operation theatres, is

being dumped without proper arrangements. It also poses a threat to hospital employees and the environment.

The officials said that Shalamar Hospital incinerator

had the capacity to treat infectious waste of all hospitals of Lahore, but it was treating less than half to it.

However, it is learnt that the Shalamar Hospital will collect all

waste of private sector hospitals and clinics as well as government's Children Hospital for incineration.

Alternatives to incineration are also available, like steam

autoclaving, microwave radiation, chemical treatment and deep burial.

Besides providing incineration facilities to all hospitals in the province, the officials said the

health department should organize regular seminars and workshops for doctors, nurses and paramedics to create awareness about clinical waste.

Training of waste handlers,



re-packaged

report

gan- supervisors, drivers and opera-
ork- tors, procurement of equipment
and and material, storage of clinical
ness waste and separation of it from
the other waste were also
lers, required, they said.

They also called for a ban on use of polythene containers and promotion of containers with suitable colour codes and stripes.

"There must be a ban on open burning of hazardous gases like dioxin, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, sulphur trioxides and nitrogen oxides as these have deleterious effects on brain, nose, throat and the respiratory system," they said.

Besides the infectious clinical waste produced by public hospitals, tons of waste is generated by private hospitals, clinics and laboratories throughout the province which cause infections and blood-borne diseases like AIDS and hepatitis.

Almost all public and private hospitals treat clinical waste as common trash and dump it either in local government skips or at some open place away from the city.

The survey report says that over 85 tons of clinical waste is being produced daily in the province. The rate of generation per bed per day is 1.8kg.

Around 115 public and private hospitals produce about 3.5 tons of infectious clinical waste in the city every day.

