

-Exposure, Remediation and Policy. Discussion centered on a number of issues of common concern including the cost of medical waste disposal, efforts by various countries to categorize components of the medical waste stream for more efficient disposal approaches, and the specific concern surrounding handling of infectious wastes. Presentations or informal comments were offered by each delegate about the management and treatment of hospital waste in the individual countries. The group concluded by considering a set of recommendations, which were raised for discussion by Austria (see p. 86).

Members of the group agreed that waste minimization or avoidance, and recycling approaches, should be pursued aggressively. Also, the necessity of segregating the hazardous component of the waste stream from other components of less concern, was highlighted because of the tremendous cost of disposal of hazardous wastes. In each country a categorization

scheme is currently in place in accordance with these goals. Despite differences between countries, there is a common focus on the importance of separating the portion of the hospital waste stream that consists of basic domestic waste items and may be handled as such, from the portion that may constitute (or always constitutes) a hazard and merits special treatment. The most popular disposal techniques for the hazardous fraction of hospital wastes continue to be incineration and burial, although interest in hot steam disinfection and microwaving is rising.

At the conclusion of the session on hospital wastes the group discussed the following recommendations and principles put forward by the delegate from Austria. Although no consensus was reached it was agreed that important points are contained in these recommendations and that they could serve as a starting point for continuing discussion.

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