

Needle stick during rodent procedures (self inoculation)

A researcher was stuck with a needle that contained an infectious agent while reaching for equipment inside of a biological safety cabinet (BSC), prior to inoculating a rodent. The needle/tubing set-up was placed to the left of the researcher but the researcher was right-handed. While reaching with their right hand to the left of their torso to pick up the needle/tubing, the tubing snagged on other equipment inside the BSC. The needle was jerked from their right hand and the point of the needle penetrated their left index finger.

Caution: Animal procedures can be very complex in nature and procedures that involve inoculating infectious agents into rodents must be done inside a BSC, which can make manipulations even more challenging. Make sure you are comfortable in your position prior to beginning animal inoculations. Align your equipment with respect to your dominant side so needles containing infectious agents (hot needles) are comfortably accessed. If a hot needle is to be inserted with your right hand be sure all the equipment involving the operation (including the needles) is placed securely to the right of your torso inside of the BSC.

Reminder: Recapping of needles should never happen. Always use secure holders for any un-capped, pre-loaded, hot, inoculation needles that will allow easy access. Never leave stray, un-capped, hot, needles, lying within the work area.