

“Evaluation and management of hospital waste treatment in the sanitary system”

The treatment and management of hospital waste, has been considered a matter of specific importance nowadays, extending important issues covered by the media and organizations which have a significant impact on public. In Albania, there have been substantial concerns with regard to this issue, considering that the treatment and specific solutions necessitate raising the awareness of respective structures, due to the importance it represents and taking into account the harmful consequences to the public health.

The State Supreme Audit of Albania, considering the situation, introduced in the annual audit plan of 2011, the performance audit on “Evaluation and management of hospital waste treatment in the sanitary system”.

The audit carried out at the Ministry of Health, included assessments in 5 hospital centers.

The main purpose, was the specialized evaluation on the general situation of treatment of hospital waste in the inspected units and the audit had as **main objective**, to prevent the risk of environmental pollution as a consequence of CO release from the existing hospital waste incinerator exhalation and their treatment together with urban waste, as well as possible bacteriological infections for the patients and the community living in the around areas.

As a result of the observed situation, it was ascertained that the relevant institutions although their efforts, still have scarcities in legal and organizational developments as well as lack of performance of the auditing structures as follow:

- the treatment of hospital waste is not applied in most of the hospitals;
- hospital waste when treated, is accomplished by private subjects, who lack environmental permission, the required protection during transportation, qualified personnel, as well as they are mixed up with general waste and deposited in unprotected areas;
- lack of coordination in planning and working machineries have not been used for the treatment of hospital waste;
- the existent incinerators, used for the treatment of hospital waste have no permission of utilization or an environmental impact assessment study, this induces environmental pollution from the CO release in waste incinerator exhalation;

The ALSAI team recommended as follows:

With regard to the legal framework: - drawing a specific law on the environmental arrangement and administration of hospital waste; drawing a national action Plan for the management of hospital waste, for the public and private sector as well as for entities generating dangerous waste, similar to the hospital waste; drawing a regulation for the administration of hospital waste depending on the typology of waste produced by public and private structures. This regulation, must determine the main methods of final treatment for harmful waste.

With regard to the organizational and management framework: - creating a data base for generating, collecting, storing, transporting and the final treatment of waste; drawing programs for hospital waste monitoring; drawing standards of hospital waste management and creating specific structures for the follow-up and monitoring legal obligations.

The recommendations have been presented to the relative entities and the ALSAI is under the process of following their implementation.