INCIDENT – ACID SPLASH

A lab member in a Homewood lab was sprayed with approximately 5 mL of acid when the tip of a cannula broke off.

The lab member was working in a fume hood and used a 20 mL syringe to inject 60 mL of acid. The fume hood sash had been left in a raised position after experimental setup, and the lab member was not wearing PPE. The tip of the cannula had also broken earlier in the procedure from use and age, and new cannulas were still on backorder.

The lab member instantly rinsed her face under a sink. She called JH Safety and Security, which arrived with JH HERU, and the lab member was then transported to Student Health.
LESSONS LEARNED

- The chemical fume hood sash should be lowered as far as possible while you can still work when performing procedures involving liquid chemicals as splash protection.
- Safety goggles and a face shield are important when working with liquid chemicals for splash protection.
- Cannulas should be examined for use and age. Check for brittleness near the tip, as this may indicate the cannula is not stable enough for use.
- Consider using an alternative syringe or glassware to add 60 mL, as the repeated use of a 20 mL syringe might have led to strain.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How old are the cannulas in use at our labs?
- How can we check if our equipment is in good condition before use?
- What other supplies do we have on back order, and are we using poor alternatives?
- How do we decide which equipment should be used for a procedure?
- What is proper PPE for a procedure with corrosive liquid chemicals?