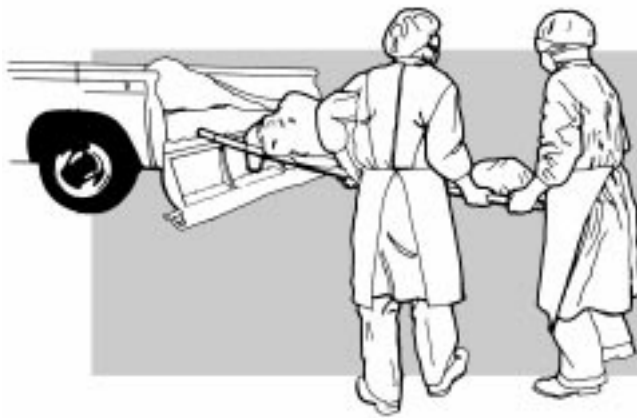


Section 7

Use Safe Burial Practices



This section describes how to:

- Prepare bodies of deceased VHF patients.
- Transport the body safely to the burial site.
- Disinfect the vehicle after transporting bodies.



Section 7

Section 7 Use Safe Burial Practices

There is risk of transmission in the health facility when a VHF patient dies because the bodies and body fluids of deceased VHF patients remain contagious for several days after death. Family and community members are also at risk if burial practices involve touching and washing the body.

7.1 Prepare the Body Safely

Burial should take place as soon as possible after the body is prepared in the health facility. Health facility staff should:

- Prepare the body safely.
- Be aware of the family's cultural practices and religious beliefs. Help the family understand why some practices cannot be done because they place the family or others at risk for exposure.
- Counsel the family about why special steps need to be taken to protect the family and community from illness. If the body is prepared without giving information and support to the family and the community, they may not want to bring other family members to the health facility in the future. They may think that if the patient dies, the body will not be returned to them.
- Identify a family member who has influence with the rest of the family and who can make sure family members avoid dangerous practices such as washing or touching the body.

To prepare the body in the health facility:

1. Wear protective clothing as recommended for staff in the patient isolation area. Use thick rubber gloves as the second pair (or outer layer) of gloves.
2. Spray the body and the area around it with 1:10 bleach solution.
3. Place the body in a "body bag" (mortuary sack) and close it securely. Spray the body bag with 1:10 bleach solution.



Section 7

4. If body bags are not available, wrap the body in two thickness of cotton cloth and soak with 1:10 bleach solution. Then wrap the body in plastic sheeting. Seal the wrapping with plastic tape. Spray the body bag as in Step 3. Place the body in a coffin if one is available.
5. Transport the body to the burial site as soon as possible. Assign a health officer or health facility staff person to accompany the body to ensure that the safety precautions remain secure during the journey.

7.2 Transport the Body Safely

VHF Isolation Precautions should remain in force when the body is being transported to the burial site.

1. Plan to take the shortest route possible for security purposes and to limit any possibility of disease transmission through accidental contact.
2. Any health facility staff who must touch or carry the body during transport should wear the same protective clothing as is worn in the isolation area. **Note: *The driver does not need to wear protective clothing if there is no contact with the body.***
3. Take a closed container or sprayer with 1:10 bleach solution in the event of any accidental contact with the body or infectious body fluids. Also use it to clean up spills in the transport vehicle.

7.3 Prepare Burial Site

1. The grave should be at least 2 meters deep.
2. Explain to the family that viewing the body is not possible. Help them to understand the reason for limiting the burial ceremony to family only.

7.4 Disinfect the Vehicle after Transporting the Body

1. The staff person who disinfects the vehicle must wear protective clothing.
2. Rinse the interior of the vehicle where the body was carried with 1:10 bleach solution.
3. Let it soak for 10 minutes.
4. Rinse well with clean water and let the vehicle air-dry. Be sure to rinse well because the solution is corrosive to the vehicle.



Fig. 58. Disinfecting the vehicle after transporting the body



Section 7
