



15 January 2024

Dear Clinical Leads & SBNS Members

Re: Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Deaths

We have recently been informed of the sad death of a patient as a consequence of failure to escalate features of a blocked external ventricular drain (EVD). The coroner has written to the SBNS, NHS England and NHS Improvement under Regulation 28 of the coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013. The objective of the Coroner's report is to prevent future deaths. As a recipient body we are legally required to provide a response to the Coroner's report which will be sent to the Chief Coroner and "Properly Interested Persons" and may be published.

We consider that sharing the Coroner's summary, is appropriate. It transpired that the EVD had dislodged resulting in death from acute hydrocephalus.

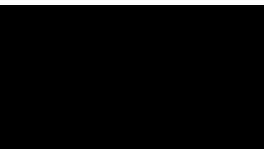
The case is a complex death where the immediate cause of death was blockage of an external ventricular drain resulting in hydrocephalus and coning. The written policy at this Trust, at the time, was not entirely clear about how the nursing staff should escalate things when a drain stopped draining but was still seen to be oscillating. Though some Trusts have developed their own policy on this area, these vary as there is currently no standard national policy dealing with this issue. This is a risk which needs to be highlighted at a national level.

We consider that the management of EVDs is complex due to the heterogeneity of the patient population, the different indications for the EVD and the variation in dependency upon the EVD, particularly over time in any given patient.

We consider it good practice to have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) applicable to the use of EVDs and that this includes an escalation plan when the EVD appears to be blocked. It would seem appropriate for concerns about loss of CSF drainage to be escalated to suitably trained staff who can competently ascertain the patency of the system and initiate urgent imaging and intervention where appropriate.

Following the Coroner's Report we ask you to review any SOP, or develop a SOP for your unit where necessary. Colleagues in Plymouth developed an SOP for the management of EVDs in Intensive Care. While this Regulation 28 will initiate review I have obtained permission from the authors for this to be shared with the Clinical Leads on request (to Suzanne).

Yours sincerely



SBNS President



- CSF Lead