

10 July 2024

Dear Miss Persaud,

Re: Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths in the matter of Mr Gary Ash

Thank you for sending us a copy of your Regulation 28 Report regarding the sad death of Mr Gary Ash. We have jointly reviewed the information available to us in the report via our [Safe Anaesthesia Liaison Group](#) (SALG). SALG is a collaborative project between the Association of Anaesthetists, NHS England's Patient Safety team and the Royal College of Anaesthetists. One of its core objectives is to analyse anaesthesia-related serious incidents and to share the learning with the specialty across the UK. We have also reviewed the information available with the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine (FICM).

Your prevention of future death report raised concerns regarding the general medical knowledge regarding the recognition and treatment of neuroleptic malignant syndrome and serotonin syndrome. While both conditions are very rare, and anaesthetists may expect to go their entire career without treating either condition, we can confirm that anaesthetists and intensivists are taught about these conditions as part of their post-graduate training^{1,2,3}. You specifically highlight knowledge of the "diagnosis of serotonin syndrome and the risk of it developing following the combined use of Fentanyl and Ondansetron as part of anaesthesia." This combination of drugs is commonly used in anaesthetic practice and the very small risk of developing serotonin syndrome is clearly flagged in many electronic prescription programs, as well as being part of anaesthetic training.

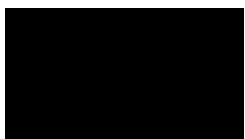
SALG publishes regular [Patient Safety Updates](#), which are distributed to all members of the Association of Anaesthetists and Royal College of Anaesthetists. FICM publishes regular [Safety Bulletins](#), which are distributed to all their members. We plan to use both publications to highlight the lessons to be learned from Mr Ash's death, in particular highlighting educational material relating to the treatment of neuroleptic malignant syndrome and serotonin syndrome.

We would be happy to respond to any questions that you might have.

Yours Sincerely



President,
Royal College of Anaesthetists



President
Association of Anaesthetists



Dean
Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine

References

1. Bartakke, A. et al, Serotonin syndrome in the perioperative period, BJA Education, 20(1): 10e17 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bjae.2019.10.003>
2. Adnet, P. et al, Neuroleptic malignant syndrome, British Journal of Anaesthesia 85 (1): 129-35 (2000) <https://doi.org/10.1093/bja/85.1.129>
3. Baldo, B. and Rose, M., The anaesthetist, opioid analgesic drugs, and serotonin toxicity: a mechanistic and clinical review. British Journal of Anaesthesia, 124 (1): 44e62 (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bja.2019.08.010>