The College of Emergency Medicine

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Safety Leads in Emergency Medicine

Background

The College of Emergency Medicine recognises that patient safety is a key issue in the modern NHS, in part related to changes in training, the experience of doctors, the pressure of targets and volume of patients. The College's Safer Care Committee recommends the development of a network of Fellows with an interest in safety to share knowledge and learning and to develop emergency medicine specific systems and processes to enhance the safety of patients in Emergency Departments.

To this end, the College recommends the establishment of the following roles:

- A Regional or National Patient safety lead on each College regional and national board
- Patient safety leads in each Emergency Department.

Role Profile for College National/Regional Patient Safety Leads

Role purpose

The College regional or national safety lead will support Fellows and Members in ensuring patient safety within Emergency Departments across the nation /region and to support the implementation of safer systems.

Responsibilities

1. To promote the principles of patient safety across the region and within individual departments

2. To act as advisor on matters of patient safety to regional fellows and members

3. To receive information from the College, disseminate and feedback to the College on matters relating to patient safety

4. To encourage a safety culture within Emergency Departments, supporting all staff in reporting and sharing patient safety issues

5. To liaise with the CEM Safer Care Committee, undertaking specific tasks or activities as requested

6. To work with local CPD lead and Schools / Higher Training Committees to ensure Emergency physicians have training in aspects of patient safety.

Activities

These activities are estimated to require up to 1 hour a week of work.

Role profile for Departmental Safety Lead

Role purpose

The patient safety lead is designated to take responsibility for ensuring clinical care is delivered safely. The safety lead may be the departmental lead consultant but many of the functions and activities may be delegated to other colleagues including senior nurses and managers. However the patient safety lead has a responsibility for ensuring agreed activities/actions are completed.

Safety Lead activities and responsibilities

Service Delivery

1. Ensure that there is a forum in the department which all groups of staff participate in, where patient safety issues are discussed, the awareness of patient safety raised and plans to improve patient safety are developed and monitored. This forum may be part of an existing forum, e.g. Quality, Risk Management or Audit Group, but should have the word "Safety" in its title

2. Lead in establishing and developing systems and processes in collaboration with other professional groups for monitoring the safety and quality of the service

3. Provide advice and support on managing adverse incidents and complaints to improve safety and quality

4. Ensure that systems are in place to receive and act on patient safety warnings and alerts from external agencies, e.g. DOH safety notices, alert letters

5. Ensure that any commissioning specifications and frameworks are developed with a clear focus on patient safety and quality

6. Serve as a resource on patient safety issues.

Collaborative Working

1. Attend relevant patient safety/quality groups in the hospital to contribute to discussions on safety and quality. This is to ensure, where appropriate, that the ED is part of wider safety initiatives in the organisation and to learn from lessons elsewhere

2. Ensure that, where appropriate, effective communication occurs with external bodies on patient safety issues

3. Liaise with the hospital Complaints/Risk Management Department on patient safety issues

4. Ensure that the development and implementation of information systems support patient safety initiatives wherever possible

5. Act as the department CEM liaison on patient safety issues.

Safer Care Committee
June 2011