



Chemotherapy underdosing

Over a period of six months between July – December 2014 during the consolidation phase of treatment for Acute Myeloid Leukaemia five patients at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and five patients at the Flinders Medical Centre received a daily dose of Cytarabine instead of a dose twice a day.

SA Health commissioned an independent review of the incident notification, management and analysis of the incorrect dosing of chemotherapy for acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) at the Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH) and Flinders Medical Centre (FMC) in 2015. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care undertook the review, the second review looking at these significant incidents.

An Independent Review Into The Incorrect Dosing Of Cytarabine To Ten Patients With Acute Myeloid Leukaemia At The Royal Adelaide Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre was completed and a report with an Executive Summary and recommendations was finalised in November 2015. HCASA and Cancer Voices SA were invited to become members of the independent review process and panel.

The independent review panel found that:

- There was a serious failure of clinical governance at the RAH.
- Staff had little or no knowledge of the Incident Management guidelines and did not make an incident report in the Safety Learning System (SLS) within the required time frame.
- The health services did not provide sufficient education or explanation of system response or policies.
- Open disclosure was not well thought out or properly planned, nor was the provision of additional support.
- There was inadequate documentation of the process or planned follow up.
- Requests by patients/families for further information were not responded to quickly nor was there a process for reporting back to them about changes that had been implemented.
- The issue of compensation was poorly managed.

**INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO THE INCORRECT
DOSING OF CYTARABINE TO TEN PATIENTS WITH
ACUTE MYELOID LEUKAEMIA AT ROYAL ADELAIDE
HOSPITAL AND FLINDERS MEDICAL CENTRE**

REVIEW PANEL
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November 2015

As a response to the findings of the Independent Report, a Select Committee of the Legislative Council was established to inquire into and report on the chemotherapy dosing errors at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre. HCASA and Cancer Voices SA, as members of the Independent Review Committee, made a submission to the Select Committee.

In 2016 HCASA recruited consumer advocate members to the newly established SA Chemotherapy Prescribing Governance Committee. This committee was a statewide committee on chemotherapy prescribing was to be established, reporting to the SA Medicines Advisory Committee (SAMAC), the most senior medicines committee in SA Health. The role of the committee was to ensure a statewide process for the review of chemotherapy prescription templates, source protocols and decision support tools. This committee has been a vital part of establishing new clinical governance structures for cancer care in South Australia.

Note: Referenced document can be accessed on the HCASA website Key Documents @ www.hcasa.asn.au

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