

*Manitoba Health, Healthy Living & Seniors (MHLS) supports reporting and learning from patient safety events. The focus of a patient safety review is to look closely at the health care system that surrounds and interacts with those giving and receiving care. The goal is to identify risks to patient safety and recommend the most effective ways to minimize risk and improve the delivery of healthcare.*

## **Patient Safety Learning Advisory**

### **Delay in Treatment Referral for Pulseless Limb**

**Summary:**

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The client presented to a rural Emergency Department during late evening hours with complaints of pain, paraesthesia, coldness and weakness to the right arm while doing dishes at home earlier that evening. The diagnosis of a cerebral vascular accident was excluded at that time.

The client was admitted to a medical unit with a plan to arrange a CT angiogram in the morning. Twice during the night, the client verbalized that the feeling was returning to the hand/arm. There were no neurological deficits found on assessment.

The next morning when the CT angiogram was performed, an embolus was noted in the brachial artery. Referral was made to a vascular surgeon. The client underwent a brachial embolectomy. Following this procedure, the patient returned for recovery and rehabilitation. No permanent impairment of function resulted.

**Keywords:** delayed referral, emboli, pulseless limb, vascular surgery

**Device Name (if applicable):**

**Drug/Name/Fluid Name: (if applicable):**

**Type of Analysis:** single event

**Topic:** Care Management

### **Findings of the Review:**

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- The standard of care for treatment of acute limb ischemia is six hours.
- The time for referral in this incident exceeded the standard of care.
- The attending physician in the Emergency Department was not aware of this standard.

### **System Learning:**

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- Ensure physicians have access to and receive orientation to clinical reference databases to ensure compliance with current best practice standards.
- Develop a provincial emergency consultation service for mentorship and support of physicians that is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week, 365 days per year.

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