

Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living (MHSAL) supports reporting and learning from patient safety events. The focus of a patient safety review is to closely look 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

Delayed CT Scan

Summary:

A patient presented to the Emergency Department (ED) after falling at home 36 hours earlier. The patient reported hitting their head at the time of the fall. The patient was kept for observation. Overnight, the patient's condition deteriorated. The patient was transported emergently to an Urgent Care Unit. CT scan revealed a hyper-acute and acute right subdural hemorrhage with some uncal herniation and a pontine hemorrhage. The patient passed away later that day.

This review is based on a single event.

Keywords: Delayed CT, Canadian CT Head Rules (CCHR)

Findings of the Review:

Medical review of this incident indicates that earlier transfer and neurological intervention may have prevented this death.

Presenting symptoms included the patient report of having a headache for eighteen hours prior and episodes of vomiting. The patient was on Warfarin for a history of Atrial Fibrillation. At the time of presentation, the patient's GCS was 15. Vital signs were stable.

System Learning:

Develop a case study for shared learning to highlight awareness of the importance of timely transfer and access to CT scan based on patient presentation and history.

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