

## Dental PAG BITES – December 2018 Issue 1

Bringing you snippets to share learning from the Dental Performance Advisory Group meeting in the SW, where concerns raised about dentists are reviewed, including information from serious incidents, SEAs and complaints.

Recordkeeping: If it's not documented there's no evidence that it happened!

Accidental injection of Sodium Hypochlorite instead of LA

Be aware of the requirement to inform NHSE if your performance or conduct has been criticised during an inquest: support and advice prior to an inquest can be obtained from the NHSE SW Medical Directorate.

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### Learning and information to share or remind:

#### 1 - Recordkeeping: If it's not documented there's no evidence that it happened!

PAG often discuss cases where a lack of documentation or poor record keeping is noted and a need of improvement is identified following a clinical review. Whilst it's understandable with increasing pressures on workload that things can be missed or forgotten, documenting a patient's consultation is important to protect yourself as well as the patient. In the **GDC's Standards for the Dental Team (2013)** it states that as a dentist you **must** ensure that "*all documentation that records your work, including patient records, is clear, legible, accurate, and can be easily understood by others*". They **must** be contemporaneous and complete, including an up-to-date medical history. Radiographs, consent forms, photographs and referral letters all form part of a patient's records. You **must** also provide patients with a written treatment plan, or plans, and retain a copy in their notes.

Remember - If it's not documented there's no evidence that it happened and make sure the notes are contemporaneous, especially if in a difficult situation!

#### 2 – Accidental injection of Sodium Hypochlorite instead of LA

PAG discussed a case where a patient attended for RCT of UR6. The dentist examined the injection site and applied topical LA. The dentist was wearing loupes and the nurse was busy. The dentist picked up the incorrect syringe containing sodium hypochlorite from the tray and injected 1ml of the incorrect solution before they noticed. The dentist informed their mentor of the incident later in the day and then contacted the local hospital for advice.

Just a reminder to keep the sodium hypochlorite syringe on the nurse's side until it is needed and not on the tray with the LA. Also, dentists should only wear loupes when they are performing operative procedures to ensure that their peripheral awareness is not impeded.

#### .3 - Be aware of the requirement to inform NHSE if your performance or conduct has been criticised during an inquest: support and advice prior to an inquest can be obtained from the NHSE SW Medical Directorate.

Dentists may be required to provide evidence to the Coroner following the death of a patient under **Rule 20(2)(d) Entitlement to examine witnesses - any person whose act or omission .... may in the opinion of the coroner have caused, or contributed to, the death of the deceased or Rule 24 - Notice to person whose conduct is likely to be called into question** of the Coroners Rules (1984).

A Dentist on the Dental Performers List is required to inform NHSE under the Performers Lists Regulations (2013 - amended) **9(2)(h)** of involvement in an inquest '*as a person who has been found by a coroner to have caused, or contributed to, the death of the deceased or otherwise had their conduct brought into question*'. Providing evidence at an inquest can be a very difficult and distressing experience for dentists but NHSE can help accessing support in relation to providing a statement, communications, media handling, or peer and professional support. Dentists can phone the team at NHSE and we will be pleased to discuss the help we can provide. Please contact **Dr Liz Thomas, 079007 15320** or [Liz.thomas2@nhs.net](mailto:Liz.thomas2@nhs.net) Just a reminder that dentists can also get support from their LDC.

Also, if you have been referred to the GDC inform NHSE SW via the generic email address [england.southwestperformerslist@nhs.net](mailto:england.southwestperformerslist@nhs.net)