

SIGN 139

Care of deteriorating patients *Consensus recommendations*



Publication
6 May 2014

The need for guidance

The Scottish Patient Safety Programme (SPSP) is coordinated by Healthcare Improvement Scotland. Over the last five years the SPSP has supported improved processes of care, including recognition of deterioration in patients, by implementation of Early Warning Score (EWS) systems.

In June 2012, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing set new aims for acute adult health care in NHSScotland including a 20% reduction in Hospital Standardised Mortality Ratios (HSMR) and that 95% of patients should be free from avoidable harm. While considerable gains have been made in improved processes to recognise and deliver appropriate treatment to deteriorating patients, there is much work to be done to implement reliable systems across Scotland.

The Scottish Intercollegiate Guideline Network (SIGN) has developed these consensus recommendations to underpin a national approach to care of adult deteriorating patients. They set out the essential elements for prompt and reliable recognition of and appropriate response to deteriorating patients in acute health care settings in Scotland.

Remit

This document provides consensus recommendations based on expert opinion for best practice in the management of deteriorating adult patients. The recommendations on practice are intended to guide NHSScotland boards, hospitals and health professionals in the development of local systems that will deliver reliable recognition and response to the deteriorating patients in their care.

Potential users

This document will be of interest to healthcare professionals involved in the care of adult deteriorating patients, their families and service commissioners.

Implementing the recommendations

The national implementation strategy for these recommendations includes the Acute Adult Scottish Patient Safety Programme which will support NHS Boards to test and implement processes to provide a structured response and review for deteriorating patients.

Implications of the recommendations include:

- a requirement to ensure adequate training for healthcare workers in the detection of and response to deteriorating patients, as well as monitoring continuing competency
- a requirement to ensure adequate levels of appropriately qualified staff to detect and respond to deteriorating patients
- implementation of a National Early Warning Score is a desired future state for acute adult care in NHS Scotland
- resource implications in introducing new electronic systems.