Reducing the risk of feeding through a misplaced nasogastric tube

AVOIDING NEVER EVENTS

Between 2005 and 2010 - 21 deaths and 79 cases of harm were reported from feeding through misplaced fine bore tubes (however little information is available regarding over-all numbers of misplaced tubes.) The single greatest cause of harm was due to misinterpretation of x-rays, accounting for 12 deaths and 45 serious incidents.

In North Bristol NHS Trust a check X-ray to determine the site of a nasogastric tube tip was misinterpreted by a junior doctor, the patient was fed into their right lung and subsequently died.

As a result of this reported ‘never event’ I was involved in a wide ranging audit within the Trust looking at all aspects of documentation and service delivery for fine bore nasogastric (NG) intubation. The implemented audit recommendations led to North Bristol receiving the 2011 ‘Patient Safety Award’ category ‘Changing culture in patient safety’.

To get away from the perceived ‘see one, do one, teach one’ approach to junior doctors interpreting nasogastric tube check images the audit recommended a nasogastric tube, check image, interpretation training package and test for F1’s & F2’s that they had to pass within 10 days of induction to be considered competent by the Trust to interpret NG check images. The training concept was transcribed into an e-learning package which the Trust gave Merck Serono licence to develop and make available.
nationally and in a format that is suitable not only for junior doctors but could also be used by radiographers or nurses. I have been collaborating with Merck Serono with this development which is now endorsed by the NPSA and has been submitted to the RCP for approval for distance learning credits. The e-learning package is available at [www.trainingngt.co.uk](http://www.trainingngt.co.uk).

I am looking for an opportunity to share with other Trusts the experiences of North Bristol Trust and discuss the recommendations that we have introduced since that time in the hope that it might help reduce the risk of occurrence elsewhere.

Thank you

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