

Patient Safety Learning Advisory

Patient Safety Event: Delay to testicular torsion diagnosis

Why was this a Critical Incident?

An adolescent presented to an emergency department (ED) with complaints of abdominal pain, and nausea, after an injury. The concern is the delay to recognizing a testicular torsion.

What happened in the incident?

An adolescent patient presented with their next of kin (NOK) to an emergency department with testicular pain after an injury.

There were delays in recognizing the emergent nature of the patient's concern and to accessing an ultrasound. When an ultrasound was completed several hours later, it was noted that the patient had a testicular torsion.

It was later learned the patient was scheduled for an orchiectomy.

What is the Health Care System learning?

Testicular torsion was not considered as a diagnosis since the injury was perceived to be related to trauma.

What are the recommendations?

Expand emergency department triage education to highlight risk factors of testicular torsion in pediatrics and assign a higher acuity level to patients who are suspected to have testicular torsion.

The Regional Medical Advisory Committee will plan a way to disseminate information about the use of the Testicular Workup for Ischemia and Suspected Torsion (TWIST) score to ED physicians across the region and raise awareness that further education is coming from the province.

In addition to the above, a Provincial recommendation was made to provide education on the application of the TWIST score. It was learned that education on the topic of urologic emergencies and application of the TWIST score is planned for Provincial clinicians.

Keywords: testicular torsion, delay to diagnosis

Glossary:

Orchiectomy: surgical removal of a teste

TWIST score: a way to physically assess a patient for five specific signs that suggest testicular torsion as a diagnosis

Your privacy is important to us, so in this summary we have removed any details which would help identify the subject of this event. It's important that we can learn from safety events and make changes to improve the care we provide.

