

Clinical Incidents & Complaints

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Learning Objectives

- Be able to recognise and react correctly to a clinical incident
- Understand why patients/families complain
- Know ways to behave which can reduce the risk of provoking a complaint
- Be able to recognise adverse events and complaints as a source of learning

Questions for you to reflect on:

- What is a clinical incident ?
- What should you do ?
- Who should you tell ?

Definition

Clinical Incident: a situation or event causing potential or actual harm to the patient or staff.

- Diagnosis
- Investigations
- Treatment planning
- Prescribing
- Clinical Procedures
- Record keeping
- Failure of team working

Who to tell?

- Ward sister/matron
- Ward registrar
- Consultant
- Enter on Trust reporting system e.g. 'DATIX' in Hull

What happens to clinical incident reports ?

- The Trust clinical governance department collates them into categories and severity.
- Departmental governance leads review all their own reports and investigate/feedback. Becomes part of departmental internal governance and learning.
- The most serious (involving serious injury or death) are called Serious Incidents (SI), and move onto a much higher level of reporting and investigation.

Complaints

- Why do patients/relatives complain?
- What do Trusts do with complaints?
- How can we avoid them?

Why do patients complain?

- Bereavement reaction
 - Denial / Anger / Grief / Acceptance
- ‘I don’t know what happened’
- ‘Why did it go wrong?’
- ‘It went wrong – someone must be blamed’

What do Trusts do with complaints?

- Early meeting, not letters
- Senior clinicians
- Openness

How can we avoid them?

- Anticipate when a problem may be arising
- Address patient concerns early
- Avoid mis-communication
- Involve senior staff
- Involve PALS (Hull) or equivalent Patient Advocacy Liaison Service

“Information from
complaints is
under-exploited as a
learning resource”

Have you achieved the learning objectives?

Final Assessment

- What do you think you have learned?
- What are you going to study further?
- What could be done to improve this module?