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8 July 2019

Ms Caitlin English
Coroner
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh St, Southbank 3006

Response to the Coroner's recommendations regarding the investigation into the death of Isabella E Rees

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to recommendations made regarding this tragic case related to button battery ingestion. We have responded to each recommendation in turn:

204. I recommend that the VPCN and RCH develop a state-wide clinical practice guideline for the assessment and management of potential button battery ingestion.

An alternative to the Coroner's recommendation has been implemented.

The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) foreign body (FB) ingestion clinical practice guideline (CPG) was updated in 2017. This involved a full literature and international guideline review, and revision of the content and format. This CPG went through the agreed extended development/updating process via the CPG Development Group, and it was endorsed as a Statewide CPG by the Safer Care Victoria Evidence Based Care Committee in August 2017. In response to the Victorian Paediatric Clinical Network (VPCN) button battery (BB) advisory group report, it was determined by the CPG Development Group that BB ingestion should be included in the FB ingestion CPG. This ensures that BB ingestion will be considered every time any FB is ingested. Moreover, in any suspected BB ingestion, other high-risk objects such as magnets, will be considered and managed appropriately. The CPG provides clear advice regarding the assessment and management of BB and other FB ingestion.

To ensure ready access to the management pathway for BB ingestion, a link to the FB ingestion CPG has been included in the A-Z index of the CPGs under B for "Button battery ingestion".

205. This guideline could be new or an amendment to the existing RCH clinical practice guideline for foreign body ingestion. The guideline should consider or include material from both QISU (which includes Dr Barker's guideline 'Disc batteries: Who and What do I Xray?') and NASPGHAN guideline for button battery ingestion and highlight the need to consider occult ingestion, including any unexplained presentation of melaena in a paediatric patient.

The Coroner's recommendation has been implemented.

The current RCH FB ingestion CPG was updated in August 2017 and the North American Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN) guideline on BBs was included in the resources used in the development process.

The information contained in the FB ingestion CPG is consistent with the QISU advice where appropriate.

'Melaena/unexplained GI bleeding' has been incorporated into the current FB ingestion CPG in two locations:

Under the heading 'History', dot point 3, 'History of coughing, drooling of saliva, pain on swallowing, reduced oral intake, abdominal pain or vomiting, melaena or unexplained GI bleeding'.

Under the heading 'Treatment' as below:

The child/parents should be instructed to seek medical advice or return to ED if the following symptoms occur:

- Breathing problems
- Abdominal pain
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Unable to tolerate food and drink
- Melaena or haematemesis

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206. Further, the guideline should promote the Victorian Poisons Information Centre as the first point of information; and be readily available via the Clinician's Health Channel website and in Paediatric State-wide Clinical Practice Guidelines.

An alternative to the Coroner's recommendation has been implemented.

If BB ingestion is considered, the priority is removal. In most cases, this would take place in a tertiary paediatric centre. In Victoria, the Paediatric Infant Perinatal Emergency Retrieval (PIPER) is a centralised service for paediatric emergency advice and transfers across the state. PIPER provides a telephone advice service as well as the retrieval service and RCH is of the view that this is a more appropriate first point of contact in a case of suspected BB ingestion than the Victorian Poisons Information Centre. The contact details for PIPER are included in the FB ingestion CPG (and all CPGs) as the standard of care escalation pathway.

All RCH CPGs are accessible via the Clinicians Health Channel (CHC). They are listed in the drop-down menu under 'Resources by category' and then 'Guidelines/point of care references'.

Yours sincerely

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