



17 June 2021

Ms Rachel Nicol
Coroners Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Via email: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms Nicol

Re: Investigation into the death of Cai Wheeler-Trow COR 2017 005946 – RACP response

In response to the letter of the 2 July 2020 regarding recommendations made by the coroner as a result of the inquest into the death of Cai Wheeler-Trow, please find The Royal Australasian College of Physicians' Paediatrics & Child Health Division response as follows:

Of the recommendations provided in the report 'Investigation into the death of Cai Wheeler-Trow' one recommendation (1) is specific to the RACP:

I recommend The Royal Australasian College of Physicians incorporate the current state of knowledge obtained from paediatric clinical practice, peer-reviewed studies such as Colditz et al, 2015, any other relevant studies and coronial findings and develop a guideline to assist paediatricians with the identification, management and treatment of subgaleal haemorrhages in newborns.

We have had an opportunity to reflect on this topic following coronial recommendations in the past which resulted not only in internal communication to paediatricians about the importance of the management of this condition at the time, but also determining that the most robust way to raise the level of awareness across multiple disciplines including not only paediatrics but also general practice, midwifery and neonatal nursing, was to publish a peer-reviewed review article in the medical literature which would then be retrievable for all time. This article specifically focuses on early diagnosis and aggressive management both of which are necessary to prevent the tragic death you are currently dealing with.

The reference and abstract of this article follows:

Colditz MJ, Lai MM, Cartwright DW, Colditz PB. Subgaleal haemorrhage in the newborn: A call for early diagnosis and aggressive management. J Paediatr Child Health. 2015;51(2):140-6. doi: 10.1111/jpc.12698.



Abstract

Subgaleal haemorrhage (SGH) is an important cause of preventable morbidity and mortality in the neonate. Its increased prevalence in recent years has coincided with the rise in the number of births assisted by vacuum extraction. Three deaths in Australia within the last 7 years have been the subject of two coronial inquests. Subsequent coronial reports have highlighted that neonatal death from SGH can be prevented if appropriate attention is paid to identification of risk factors, early diagnosis, close observation and aggressive treatment. To prevent unnecessary deaths, all involved in the care of the baby after birth need to be aware of the importance of prompt diagnosis, monitoring and early treatment of SGH.

This presented our Australian experience and remains currently relevant and up to date. We are aware of only one subsequent publication of a clinical series of 20 Korean neonates in 2018, as follows: Sun Jin Lee, Jin Kyu Kim, Sun Jun Kim. *The clinical characteristics and prognosis of subgaleal hemorrhage in newborn*. Korean J Pediatr. 2018; 61 (12) 387-391.

The training of our members in neonatology occurs in maternity hospitals and it is here that clinical guidelines for management of subgaleal haemorrhage in the specific context of that hospital are maintained and updated as necessary. Numerous of these clinical guidelines are searchable online. One such from the King Edward Memorial Hospital in Perth can be found [here](#) (or see attached pdf).

In relation to your specific enquiries, we do not have a guideline or flow chart for paediatricians on subgaleal haemorrhage in neonates and secondly we do not have a specific training course for paediatricians in the prevention detection and management of subgaleal haemorrhage in the newborn. Both of these important issues are dealt with as described above.

Should you have any questions, please contact us via email at paed@racp.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

Dr Anne Cunningham, FRACP, PhD
Lead Fellow, Education Renewal

Professor Catherine Choong
PCHD President, 2020 - 2022

cc Professor Paul Colditz
PCHD President, 2018 - 2020