

16 March 2011

To all GPs

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Dear Colleagues

Community DVT Pathway

The DVT pathway has been running for more than six months and I was preparing to review the outcomes and issues with the help of the PCT Public Health team.

This review however, has been overtaken by events, as there has been a Serious Untoward Incident [SUI] at Taunton and Somerset Foundation Trust hospital. This involved a missed DVT resulting in a pulmonary embolism (PE). This patient was not on the Community Pathway, but presented directly to A&E at T&SFT hospital. She had an ultrasound, which did not show an above knee thrombus. She collapsed at home nine days later and was admitted with a PE.

It is not clear at this stage, whether the recommended review at one week had occurred; the Trust investigation will consider this. However, **it does highlight how important it is to review the patients with negative scans and Wells Score of 1 or more at 5-7 days to assess if the symptoms are resolving and consider a re-scan if the symptoms are not resolving** [and repeat d-Dimer if not previously done or previously negative] with the aim of identifying patients whose below knee thrombus has extended above the knee. T&SFT are undertaking their own review of their pathway to ensure that an appropriate review takes place. It will be necessary for us to meet with them and Yeovil Hospital Foundation Trust to ensure that any changes made are consistent across the catchment areas of the two trusts.

We will obviously be reviewing all the evidence on this subject but I am attaching a useful paper from primary care in the USA which I have found helpful

Yours sincerely



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Attachment: *Current Diagnosis of Venous Thromboembolism in Primary Care: A Clinical Practice Guideline from the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American College of Physicians*
Ann Fam Med 2007;5:57-62. DOI: 10.1370/afm.667.