

Standardising Care and Expediting Fractured Neck of Femur Admissions from the Emergency Department

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Fractured Neck of Femur (#NOF) presentations to the Emergency Department (ED) are relatively common, with over 200 presentations per year at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane. Despite an existing clinical pathway, care of the #NOF patient lacked a streamlined process with many communication issues between the ED and the ward delaying admission.

Two strategies implemented to overcome these difficulties were a #NOF liaison nurse and a revision of the existing clinical pathway to a #NOF checklist. The role of the #NOF liaison nurse was to improve communication between ED, Orthopaedics and bed management to expedite the admission of the #NOF patient to the ward. The removal of a clinical pathway and replacement with an ED #NOF checklist that aligned with the existing admission checklist utilised in ED, was designed to streamline clinical decision making regarding the care of the #NOF patient in the ED. The major changes to clinical care being the administration of femoral nerve blocks for all #NOF patients unless contraindicated and inclusion of a framework that guided clinical decision making around IDC placement.

The outcomes of this standardisation of care and streamlining of processes has been significant including consistent administration of femoral nerve blocks with 100% of patients receiving opioid sparing pain relief, compared to 60% pre pathway revision. IDC insertions have declined, with 17% of #NOF patients not requiring an IDC during their admission in the first half of this year (in the first quarter of this year.)

The impact of these initiatives on NEAT targets is significant with the average ED length of stay for #NOF patients decreasing to 3 hours with the #NOF liaison nurse compared to 5.4 hours for after-hours presentations and 4.1 hours during hours over the weekend. Care standardisation and improved communication with departments involved with #NOF patients is the foundation of this program and its success.