



Accessing Emergency Spinal Services Update (February 2021)

Situation

- Referring to and admitting to specialist centres for emergency spinal services has been problematic for many years for Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDdUHB).
- Need for review of how services are accessed has been identified internally, but has been superseded by a review across South Wales.
- Clinical Lead for Trauma & Orthopaedics (T&O) is the Deputy Chair.
- HDdUHB clinicians attached to each review group are detailed below:
 - Non specialised degenerative cervical
 - Cauda Equina Syndrome
 - Metastatic Spinal Cord Compression (MSCC)
 - Primary sarcoma
 - Intradural pathology
 - Adult deformity and specialised orthopaedic spine
 - Major Trauma Network (including Acute spinal cord injury & Elderly trauma)
 - Spinal cord injury specialist rehabilitation
 - Infection

Risks and Mitigation

Risks

- Delay in receiving timely treatment and management advice on spinal patients from tertiary centres

Mitigation

- Agreement by Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) in the acceptance of emergency spinal patients has allowed for a much improved service for patients since the start of the pandemic, with no reported delays.
- Appointment of Trauma Lead Manager to oversee Trauma on a Health Board wide basis.
- Daily huddles led by Trauma Lead Manager, involving Trauma Nurses, Head of Plaster Services and Clinical Lead T&O to ensure immediate escalation of any issues.
- Recognition of a need to improve access to emergency spinal services across South Wales by the main providers of care.

Risks and Mitigation (cont'd)

- The inaugural workshop established by SBUHB and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board (CVUHB) with the aim of launching a project to develop proposals for a safe, effective and sustainable model for spinal surgery in South and West Wales was held in October 2020. As a result, various work-streams relating to the main areas of care have been developed with the focus being:
 - To identify activity undertaken over the last three years
 - Description of the current pathway
 - Develop a proposed pathway in line with current guidance and best practice
 - Identify the gaps between the current and proposed pathways
- Major Trauma Network went live from 14th September 2020 with all major trauma being managed through clear pathways.
- Fracture clinic templates at Glangwili General Hospital (GGH) allow for urgent spinal patients to be reviewed.

Risks and Mitigation (cont'd)

- HDdUHB is well represented at the South Wales working groups with representation from all sites to reflect the differing needs at each site.
- Collaborative working across South Wales is ensuring a fast turnaround in relation to working pathways, development of a risk register/issues log.
- The most recent meeting held on 20th January 2021 proposed some potentially new pathways to be utilised, these have been circulated for comment/approval. Once agreed these will be implemented across the network.
- Major Trauma spinal patients are identified through the Health Board's major trauma team. Strong links in place between the site Trauma Nurses and the Major Trauma Practitioners.

Recommendation

To provide an update for QSEAC to take assurance from the developments to improve patient access to Emergency Spinal Services