



Childhood extravasation injuries: Improved outcome following the introduction of hospital-wide guidelines



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KEYWORDS

latrogenic injury; Extravasation; Reconstruction; Plastic surgery **Summary** *Introduction*: Extravasation is an iatrogenic injury that may produce soft tissue necrosis requiring surgical reconstruction (Rose et al., 2008) and (Goon et al., 2006). ^{1,2} Previous review of extravasation injuries within our hospital showed that early referral to plastic surgeons and washout of high-risk cases lead to favourable outcome in 86% of patients (Gault, 1993). ³ Hospital-wide guidelines were introduced in 2005. This paper closes the audit loop by evaluating extravasation injuries outcome following the introduction of these guidelines. *Methods*: All patients referred to the plastic surgery department for extravasation injuries between October 2008 and October 2009 were reviewed. A favourable outcome was defined as resolution without tissue loss requiring surgical reconstruction. Patients were excluded if they sustained the extravasation in other institution.

Results: A total of 82 extravasation injuries in 78 patients were reviewed during the audit period. Mean age was 3.2 years (Median 0.2 years, Minimum 0 day, and maximum 16.7 years). The injuries were more frequent on the left half of the body (52%) and involving the upper limbs (59%). Mean time to referral was 8 h, with 60% of patients referred within 6 h of the injury, 30% in 6-12 h, and 10% referred after more than 12 h 26% of the injuries required washout treatment - the rest was treated conservatively. Tissue necrosis occurred in 3 cases (4%) but required no surgical intervention due to the small area affected.

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Conclusion: Our audit showed an improved outcome of extravasation injury following introduction of hospital-wide guidelines of early referral to specialist team and washout of high-risk cases.

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Introduction

Extravasation injury is defined as "the inadvertent administration of a desiccant or vesicant solution into the tissue

rather than into the vessel as was intended".⁴ Invasive access, via a variety of routes and devices, is indicated in the paediatric patient to provide fluids, medications or parenteral nutrition. When such devices fail, leading to the leak of

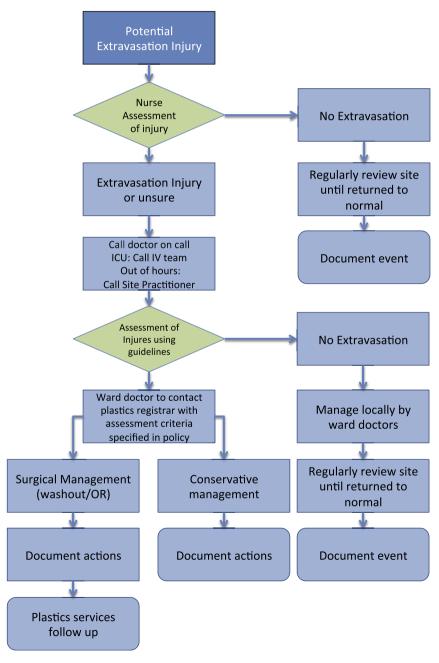


Figure 1 Flow chart summarizing the Guidelines of initial management of extravasation injuries at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children.

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