

Industry alert: Anticoagulant therapy and falls resulting in head injuries

The Department of Health wishes to alert all Australian Government subsidised aged care providers to the South Australia Coroner's inquest findings regarding anticoagulant therapy and falls resulting in minor head injuries.

South Australia Coroner's Report

The South Australia Coroner's report makes recommendations for the management of care recipients on anticoagulant therapy who suffer a fall that results in a minor head injury.

The report notes:

- the increased risk of intracranial bleeding associated with anti-coagulation therapy
- care recipients with pre-existing cognitive impairment may have a lot of cerebral shrinkage and this can mean that it is often difficult to detect intracranial bleeding until it is too late.

The report also notes that the aged care home concerned has amended its protocols and now requires any care recipient on anticoagulant therapy to be sent to hospital for assessment following a fall resulting in a minor head injury.

Suggestions for your consideration

All Commonwealth subsidised aged care homes are currently required by legislation (*Aged Care Act 1997*) to:

- have internal systems and procedures in place to protect the health, safety and well-being of care recipients at all times
- conduct timely and ongoing assessments when care recipients' needs change
- ensure staff have the appropriate knowledge and skills to perform their roles effectively
- arrange referrals for appropriate health specialists in accordance with care recipients assessed needs and preferences.

While the South Australia Coroner's findings are recommendations and not legislated requirements, please:

- read the full report at:
[www.courts.sa.gov.au/CoronersFindings/Lists/Coroners%20Findings/Attachments/643/FO RD%20Marie%20Janet.pdf](http://www.courts.sa.gov.au/CoronersFindings/Lists/Coroners%20Findings/Attachments/643/FO%20RD%20Marie%20Janet.pdf)
- make your key personnel aware of the information in the report and this alert
- take appropriate action.

If you have any questions contact: QRB.Coords@health.gov.au.

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