

From: Elaine Lawson  
Safety & Quality Unit

Date: 4 June 2009

1. Dr Jim Livingstone (Approved 4/6/09)
2. Dr Liz Mitchell

**NPSA Safety Alert 22: Reducing the risk of Hyponatraemia when administering IV fluids to children**

**Issue:**

Dr Tony Stevens has emailed CMO regarding RQIA recommendation for Trusts on development of competency assessment tools in administration of IV infusions to children

**Timescale:**

Routine

**Presentational issues:**

Publication of RQIA report in December 2008 which was accompanied by Minister's Press Release

O'Hara Inquiry due to resume public hearings early in 2010

**FOI Implications:**

Disclosable

**Recommendation(s):**

That CMO respond to Dr Stevens in terms of the attached draft letter

**Background**

1. The NPSA Safety Alert was issued to HSC Trusts for implementation on 27 April 2007. A local regional group developed a wall chart for 0-16 year olds which was issued on 16 October 2007. Trusts had to assess implementation of recommendations and submit an audit template to the Department by 31 October 2007.
2. RQIA was commissioned to undertake a review of the implementation of the Safety Alert and its report was published on 5 February 2009. Although substantive progress had been made, it was recognised that further progress was required in some areas. Minister therefore asked RQIA to repeat its review with a view to Trusts having implemented all the recommendations by April 2009. This review is to be conducted by

June 2009.

### Current position

3. In response to RQIA's findings the former DCMO, Dr Harper, commissioned GAIN to develop guidelines on fluid prescribing in adults (16+). As part of this work, the opportunity is being taken to revise the wall chart for children to clarify that it applies to the age group 0 – day before 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is intended that these will be issued together.
4. Dr Harper also agreed with those clinicians leading on the development of the GAIN guidelines, that in order to support medical staff in adult wards in prescribing fluids using the paediatric guidelines, the following would be pursued:
  - Undergrad medical training should include fluid prescribing in children as well as adults, emphasising the need to seek senior advice;
  - The medical school should be asked to consider ways in which to expose future F1s to fluid prescribing during work shadowing; and
  - The issue of training nurses in the administration of fluids should be raised with relevant organisations to explore if further action is required.
5. Dr Mitchell wrote to Dr McMurray and Professor Johnston in these terms on 26 March 2009. NIMDTA has responded that monitoring of the mandatory, online module on Hyponatraemia will be brought forward so that it is referred to on induction day for all F1 doctors and that evidence of completion is required within the first three months of commencement of the Foundation Programme. Professor Maurice Savage has confirmed that training on fluid prescription in children is well embedded in the undergraduate curriculum and is repeated in different modules in various years of the programme. A full response on these issues has been provided to the O'Hara Inquiry.
6. Nursing Group has advised that issue was also raised with nursing and midwifery education providers and service education leads at the Education Strategy Group. These education providers have also provided full responses to the O'Hara Inquiry.

### Recommendation

7. In light of the responses received, it is suggested you respond to Dr Stevens in the terms outlined in the attached draft.

Elaine Lawson  
Safety, Quality & Standards Directorate  
[REDACTED]

cc. CNO  
CPO  
Dr Heather Livingston  
Dr Martin Donnelly

Kathy Fodey  
David Galloway  
Diane Taylor  
Andrew Browne  
Karen Campbell  
George Russell  
Jennifer Mooney

Dr A B Stevens  
Medical Director  
Belfast HSC Trust

Our ref: DH1/09/86113  
Your ref:

Date: June 2009

**RQIA Review into Application of NPSA Safety Alert 22: Reducing the Risk of Hyponatraemia when Administering IV Fluids to Children**

Dear

Thank you for your email of 23 April 2009 regarding a regional approach to the development of a competency assessment tool in administration of IV infusion to children.

As part of the ongoing work within the Department, I wrote to Dr Terry McMurray and Professor Johnston in March about the training required at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to promote awareness of fluid prescribing in all groups, and particularly the under 16s.

I have received assurance that appropriate training has been developed for undergraduates and is now included as part of F1 induction training. The new Hyponatraemia guidelines will be addressed in the mandatory induction day for all F1 doctors and educational supervisors will ask to see evidence of completion of the online module at the first educational supervisor's meeting which is held within the first three months of commencement of the Foundation Programme.

Trusts now need to ensure F1 and F2 doctors are aware of the need to complete the module and that NIMDTA will continue to pursue those who have not done so.

The BMJ e-learning module is available to all doctors and on completion, a certificate may be printed off. It is for Trusts to put in place a process to assure themselves that doctors have complied with the appropriate training. You have indicated that clinicians would have different training requirements and again, it is for Trusts to decide what learning staff will be required to undertake.

This issue has also been raised with nursing and midwifery education providers of undergraduate and post-graduate programmes.

Trusts should have in place appropriate governance arrangements to ensure effective multi-disciplinary team working in the prescribing and administration of fluids, as in other clinical areas. The organisation should ensure that all staff are made aware of the arrangements and their responsibilities.

I hope this addresses the issues you have raised. Since it applies across all HSC Trusts, I am copying this letter to Medical Directors.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Elizabeth Mitchell**

cc. Medical Directors, HSC Trusts  
CEO, HSC Board  
CEO, NIMDTA