



Emergency transfers to the MTC

Situation

A delay in emergency transfer of a Trauma Unit patient occurred because of concerns over critical care capacity.

Background

A patient taken by YAS to a trauma unit required emergency transfer for Major Trauma Centre care. The TU consultant followed correct procedure in attempting to arrange ED to ED transfer. The transfer was halted by LTHT clinicians because there were no critical care beds available. The transfer occurred 5 hours later. No harm came to the patient.

Assessment

The delay in transfer should not have occurred. Major Trauma Centre emergency referrals (or ambulance bypasses) are not dependent on critical care capacity. If a TU consultant feels emergency transfer is required for life or limb saving treatment that cannot be provided at the TU then that transfer must occur ASAP. The TU consultant must inform the MTC ED consultant in the first instance. Other key specialties should be informed of the clinical details by the TU team as the transfer is being arranged. The patient will be sent to LGI ED. The decision to close the MTC to such patients can only be made at executive level.

Recommendation

In essence - the Major Trauma Centre will only be closed in exceptional circumstances and a decision on closure can only be made at executive level.

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