

## WYMTN Safety Alert

### Sedation in head injured patients

Patients with head injuries may often be agitated - either as a result of the injury itself or because of co-existing problems such as intoxication

Whilst there is a role for judicious use of appropriate sedation in a **closely monitored environment** clinicians must be very aware of:

- A risk of delaying recognition of a deterioration in the patient's GCS
- A risk of over-sedation leading to hypoventilation with potentially detrimental effects on the already present traumatic brain injury

For most trauma patients requiring sedation *prior* to CT scanning intubation and ventilation is the most appropriate way to facilitate safe investigation.

Clinicians must also consider and address other potential causes for agitation such as pain, hypoxia, anxiety and hypoglycaemia and ensure all appropriate optimisation measures are in place as per WYMTN Traumatic Brain Injury management guidance.

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