

TRAUMA AND INJURY SERVICES

CHAPTER 12

All hospitals in SWSAHS provide care for trauma and injury patients. Trauma in SWSAHS has some unique features such as large volume, high penetrating trauma rate and high instance of falls. Trauma patients are generally admitted under general surgeons, only some of whom have a special interest in trauma. Trauma care involves a spectrum from pre-hospital injury prevention strategies to Ambulance Service and public involvement, through to the resuscitation areas and then definitive care with rehabilitation and adult health. Pre-hospital triage allows the direction of seriously injured patient to go directly to the major trauma service at Liverpool by bypassing the local hospital reducing time to definitive care and relieving the burden of treatment on hospitals with fewer resources to deal with serious injury.

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In SWSAHS the major Trauma Service is located at Liverpool Hospital. Volumes of trauma admissions are large with over 40,000 trauma admissions since 1995 and annually approximately 2,600 trauma admissions to Liverpool Hospital itself. Far greater numbers present to both Emergency Departments throughout the area and local doctors within the community. Injury prevention and linkages to acute trauma services are vital with the opportunity to improve mortality related injury, specifically in road trauma, poisoning, swimming pool injuries, sports injuries, and fires.

It is internationally recognised that an organised Trauma System with a Surgical Trauma Service improves outcome, this is coupled in a multidisciplinary approach of Trauma Surgeons and Nursing Case Managers delivering care. It is currently estimated that 30% of trauma deaths have some avoidable element in their care and that this is lower among dedicated Trauma Surgeons. Missed or delayed injuries can be significantly reduced by reorganisation of our Trauma Service.

It is anticipated that trauma presentations will continue to grow across the area based upon increased prevalence and related to population growth.

Current Services

Liverpool Hospital

Liverpool Hospital, as the major Trauma Service is the current hub for the four urban and one rural hospital in the area. Trauma is a significant load on the hospital and the average length of stay is 9.1 days. The current staff profile includes a Medical Director, Deputy Director, trauma CNC, one case manager, a clinical fellow (currently unfunded), honorary fellow, better practice guideline project manager (one year contract), area trauma coordinator, externally funded research officer and administrative and secretarial staff.

Research and Teaching

The Trauma Department at Liverpool Hospital is internationally and nationally recognised as a leader in the delivery of major trauma services. It has developed comprehensive educational programmes in an undergraduate and postgraduate spanning multidisciplinary fields. A comprehensive trauma registry has been developed since 1995 with over 40,000 patients on its database. Liverpool Hospital in conjunction with other providers of trauma care is developing the Australia Pacific Foundation for Trauma Education and Clinical Standards to optimise the delivery of trauma care through better practice guidelines and trauma education.

Major Equipment

The Trauma Department is being expanded at Liverpool as part of the Liverpool Emergency and Trauma Service Capital redevelopment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Major Trauma Service (MTS) in SWSAHS continue to be based at Liverpool Hospital in accordance with the NSW State Trauma Plan.
- Further enhancements of specialist trauma surgeons, case managers and a registrar be provided to enable the admission of patients to a dedicated trauma unit.
- An Academic Chair in Trauma and Emergency Surgery be appointed.
- Support be provided for the development of the 'Australia Pacific Foundation for Trauma Education and Clinical Standards' at Liverpool.
- Other hospitals fulfil their designated roles in the NSW Trauma Plan as defined by NSW Health.