

SUMMARY

Dr. Khalid Saleh Fadeel (CPSO# 88136)

1. Disposition

On July 29, 2015, the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (“the Committee”) required family physician Dr. Fadeel to appear before a panel of the Committee to be cautioned with respect to missing the diagnosis of retropharyngeal abscess and Ludwig’s angina, and his lack of documentation regarding his reassessment of Patient A.

The Committee also required Dr. Fadeel to review College policy #4-12, *Medical Records*, and submit a written study report of the policy document referencing how it is applicable to his situation; complete a self-study on life threatening soft tissue infections of the retropharyngeal space as well as Ludwig’s angina; and submit a written review of the self-study program, including a re-creation of the chart as it should have been completed for the patient in question. Dr. Fadeel is required to bring this study report when he attends for his caution.

2. Introduction

A family member of Patient A complained to the College expressing concern about the care that Dr. Fadeel provided to Patient A, including his failure to investigate, diagnose and treat Patient A’s abscess (including with the use of antibiotics), and his actions in inappropriately discharging Patient A from the hospital and failing to prevent Patient A’s death.

Dr. Fadeel informed the Committee that Patient A’s care was handed over to him by another physician as a case of anaphylaxis. He assessed the patient and did not notice any saliva drooling, tongue swelling, respiratory distress, or upper air way obstruction. Dr. Fadeel discussed treatment options and a management plan, prescribed medications to Patient A, and advised him to return to the Emergency Department if his symptoms returned or felt worse. Dr. Fadeel did not document his discharge instructions. He did not order any imaging tests or prescribe antibiotics, and he did not seek specialist consultations, as the working diagnosis at the time was anaphylactic reaction.

3. Committee Process

A panel of the Committee, consisting of public and physician members, met to review the relevant records and documents related to the complaint, as well as College policies and relevant legislation.

4. Committee's Analysis

In the Committee's view, Patient A's symptoms of fever, elevated white cell count and difficulty swallowing (which did not subside despite treatment ordered by another physician) did not fit the criteria for Dr. Fadeel's working diagnosis of an allergic reaction, and should have alerted him to the clear signs of infection and the possibility of sepsis. The Committee was concerned that Dr. Fadeel missed Patient A's unusual but life-threatening diagnosis of retropharyngeal abscess and Ludwig's angina, given that Patient A's symptoms were a classic description of the disease.

Ludwig's angina is a medical emergency that necessitates an immediate consultation with an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) specialist, and incision and drainage of the abscess, which Dr. Fadeel failed to recognize and act upon. Dr. Fadeel should not have allowed Patient A to be discharged from the hospital with only a prescription, given his serious condition.

The Committee was of the view that had Dr. Fadeel ordered imaging tests, plain view x-rays would have been able to show extensive soft tissue swelling and a CT scan would have been able to identify an abscess. Consultation with an ENT specialist, and incision and abscess drainage should have been Dr. Fadeel's immediate course of action in this serious case.

The Committee was also disappointed with the lack of content in Dr. Fadeel's records for Patient A, including any clear notation which would suggest that Dr. Fadeel performed a reassessment of Patient A when asked to do so by another physician on handover; or that he examined the inside of Patient A's mouth. Dr. Fadeel also failed to document Patient A's temperature, mouth swelling, and elevated white blood cell count.

The Committee also noted that Dr. Fadeel's response to this complaint was minimal and failed to demonstrate insight or contrition, and the Committee found this troubling in light of the significance of the diagnosis missed by Dr. Fadeel and the tragic outcome of this case.