

## Patient Safety Issues on Placement – Notes for Students

### Take-Home Messages

By the end of this lesson, students should be able:

- To understand that the whole team is responsible for patient safety, including medical students.
- To understand the importance of raising concerns about patient safety promptly.
- To understand that concerns can be raised via following the policy of the medical school, or by asking an experienced healthcare professional for advice.

### The Importance of “Speaking Up”

- Patient safety is the responsibility of the **whole team** - this may include clinical and non-clinical members. This is why registered doctors *must* take action to raise concerns and support others to raise concerns over patient safety.
- Responding to risks applies to everyone working in a healthcare setting – including *medical students* on clinical placements. Patient safety does not only relate to the clinical treatment patients receive – it also includes raising concerns when a patient’s dignity or comfort is compromised.
- You must:
  - Raise any concerns you have about patient safety, dignity or comfort promptly.
  - Follow your medical school’s policy on raising concerns, wherever possible.

### How to Raise a Concern Regarding Patient Safety

Raising concerns about patient care can be difficult and as a medical student, you may not feel comfortable raising issues with doctors that may be responsible for teaching and assessing your performance on the hospital placement. This is why, wherever possible, you should:

1. *Follow your medical school policy on raising concerns:* This will help you understand how to deal with difficult issues like these.
2. In *exceptional circumstances*, if you do not feel comfortable following your medical school policy, you must still find another way to raise your concerns. For example, you *can talk to a member of staff with whom you have an ongoing relationship* (e.g. personal tutor), who can support you.
3. *Avoid raising concerns anonymously* wherever possible, as it can raise difficulty in the investigation of the situation.

#### **Reflective Practice Activity: Optional**

Spend 5-10 minutes reflecting on a time you felt concerned over patient safety on placement or, safety of a family member or friend, during an activity.

Now, summarise why you felt concerned and what you would have done differently knowing what you know now from the lesson.

Think about: *Why did you feel concerned? Did you voice your concern? Why did or didn't you voice your concern? How did you voice your concern? If you voiced your concern, how did that change the scenario? In the future, would you go about raising your issue in a different way? If so, how and why?*