



8 July 2019

File ref: DOC/19/86626

Ms Caitlin English
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh St
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006



By email: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Ms English

**Re: Finding into the Death of Miss Isabella Estelle Rees
Court Reference COR 2015 0592**

I am writing in response to your recommendations made following your investigation into the death of Isabella Estelle Rees, and detailed in your Finding delivered on 4 April 2019, received by Ambulance Victoria on 11 April 2019.

Thank you for bringing your Finding to the attention of Ambulance Victoria.

AV has reviewed your recommendation, at paragraph 208 of your Finding, which was directed to the Royal College of Physicians, Paediatrics and Child Health Division, the Royal College of General Practitioners, the Australian College for Emergency Medicine and Ambulance Victoria:

208. I recommend the use of this finding as an educational tool to raise awareness of occult button battery ingestion and highlight the need for urgent management of ingested batteries; and to ensure there is inclusion within core curricula guidelines for management.

Clinical practice guidelines and current review

AV has in place Overdose (paediatric) guidelines (CPG P0707) which highlight the need for urgent management of ingested substances.

AV is currently reviewing its suite of overdose guidelines, in collaboration with the Victorian Poisons Information Centre. In these guidelines, the term "overdose" will be changed to the broader and more inclusive "toxicology". Information on management for suspected button battery ingestion will be included. This review is scheduled for completion by end 2019/early 2020.

AV bulletin and newsletter

AV released a bulletin to all operational staff on 16 September 2016 following the button battery ingestion related child death of a 4 year old child in Queensland. The bulletin emphasised that recognition by paramedics of the possible risk to the child of ingestion/ insertion/ inhalation of a



foreign body is paramount. It stated that children need to be assessed in an ED without delay if there is any suspicion of ingestion/ insertion/ inhalation of a foreign object.

AV detailed the Queensland case further in its paediatric-focused Clinical Matters newsletter in May 2017. The article concluded,

"if the child is symptomatic or has abnormal vital signs, transport by ambulance is required. Handover must include specific mention of possible ingestion of a button battery if it is a potential cause of the patient presentation. If the child is well and vital signs are normal, it may be appropriate to advise parents or carers to transport the child safely, but without delay to an emergency department. It should be emphasised that an assessment is necessary to exclude ingestion of a harmful foreign body, even though the child may look well now."

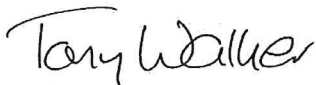
Implementation of your recommendation

AV is implementing your recommendation by:

1. Distributing a Bulletin to all operational staff on 8 July 2019. It highlights the danger of potential ingestions in paediatric patients (with specific reference to button batteries, or objects that may be similar in appearance such as coins) and states that:
 - in any case where ingestion or inhalation of a foreign body may have taken place, the child should be assessed at an Emergency Department;
 - if a child is symptomatic or has abnormal vital signs, transport by ambulance is required; and
 - the handover must include specific mention of the concern relating to ingestion.
2. Including the topic of occult button battery ingestion in the Clinical Education Day 1 in FY 2020, commencing on 26 August 2019 and concluding on 11 January 2020. The training includes information and referencing to Clinical Bulletin and a video. Paramedics on leave during the training delivery period will still be able to access the training online.
3. Completing the current review of its suite of overdose clinical practice guidelines by end 2019 / early 2020.

If you have any questions or concerns in relation to the details provided, please contact my office on 9840 3540, and we would be happy to assist further.

Yours sincerely



Assoc Prof Tony Walker ASM
Chief Executive Officer

