

continue some treatment. This usually involves applying a cream to the area (depending on which drug has leaked) and gently exercising the affected arm or hand and taking painkillers if needed. The treatment for extravasation can make the treated area uncomfortable and you may need to take painkillers for a while afterwards.

Help is available and for further information please contact:

Ph: +92-42-35905000

Chemotherapy Department: **24 Hours Service**

Extension (Adult): **5016**

Extension (Pediatrics): **5014**

Inpatient:

Inpatient 2-A: **2291, 2292**

Inpatient 2-B: **2295**

Inpatient 3: **2395, 2399**

Reference:

North Devon Healthcare (NHS) Trust, UK (2008)

Royal Marsden Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, London (2008)

Chemotherapy and the Rare Risk of Extravasation



What is Extravasation?

Extravasation injury usually refers to the damage caused by leakage of solutions from the vein to the surrounding tissue spaces during intravenous administration.

What causes extravasation?

The exact cause is not always clear but we know that some people are more at risk than others.

These include:

- People with fragile veins
- People with a low platelet count (platelets are cells in the blood which help to stop bleeding: they also line the inside of veins)
- People who have already had a lot of chemotherapy treatments through their veins.
- Children
- Elderly, confused or agitated people

What are the symptoms?

- You may notice redness, inflammation or irritation, warmth, pain, stinging or swelling at or near the site where the drug enters the vein.
- Fortunately, more severe symptoms are very rare. However, these can range from superficial tissue/skin reaction, inflammation and blistering of the nearby skin to damage the underlying tissue and structures such as muscle and tendons.

How is it diagnosed?

Extravasation can be difficult to diagnose as some drugs can make veins feel sore without causing lasting damage and other drugs can cause temporary redness or 'flare' (redness) around the treatment site.

If during the process of administration of drugs, you feel a change in the sensation or anything different in the

way the drugs are going into the vein, please let the nursing staff know immediately. It is important to let us know how you really feel so that we can act quickly. If extravasation is confirmed or suspected as having occurred, we will ask you to look at the area once a day to assess whether

- The area has changed in color or increased in redness
- The area is blistering, peeling or flaking
- The area is more uncomfortable
- The pain is making it difficult for you to exercise the arm or hand

If the answer is 'yes' to any of the above symptoms please contact us (SKMCH & RC).

(See number at the end)

Can it be prevented?

We can reduce the risk by careful choice of the type of cannula used (this is a small device for entering the vein and through which fluids and drugs are given) and where it is placed in the hand or arm. The possibility of extravasation occurring cannot be completely prevented. This is why it is so important that you let staff know immediately of any change in the sensation around the cannula whilst the treatment is being given. Prompt action can reduce the damage and discomfort of extravasation. However unfortunately, even with prompt action, certain drugs can cause painful tissue damage and some patients may need to see a plastic surgeon for treatment.

How is it treated?

SKMCH & RC has a clear policy on the management of extravasation and the treatment required for the different drugs used. All staff working in the Hospital receives regular training on extravasation.

If you experience an extravasation, you will be asked to