

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **NICE issues guidance on the use of pre-hospital intravenous fluid therapy in trauma**

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has today issued guidance to the NHS in England and Wales on the use of pre-hospital fluid replacement therapy in trauma caused by blunt and penetrating injuries in adults, children and infants.

Severe bleeding as a result of such injuries can lead to a failure of the blood circulatory system (known as hypovolaemic shock) which, if uncorrected, can result in inadequate perfusion and oxygenation of tissue. This in turn can lead to permanent damage to vital organs and multiple organ failure – one of the major causes of death in trauma patients.

Fluid replacement therapy attempts to reverse the effects of hypovolaemia by increasing circulatory blood volume and blood pressure back towards normal levels in order to maintain the perfusion of vital organs and so reduce the risk of death from multiple organ failure.

The NICE guideline recommends that for people with severe hypovolaemic shock (indicated when a palpable radial pulse is absent or, in the case of penetrating torso injuries, the absence of a central pulse), intravenous fluid in the form of crystalloid solutions should be initiated in boluses of no more than 250ml and continued until a radial (or central) pulse is palpable. The guidance also recommends that administration of intravenous fluid should not delay transportation to hospital but that it should be given en-route if possible.

**Andrea Sutcliffe, Planning and Resources Director and Executive Lead for the appraisal**, said: “Rapid blood loss caused by blunt or penetrating injury results in death in approximately one-third of trauma patients – in 2000 over 15,000 deaths in

England and Wales were caused in this way. The independent appraisal committee that advises us considered the evidence for the pre-hospital initiation of fluid therapy in trauma and consulted widely with health professionals in this field. The resulting guidance makes it clear to the NHS across England and Wales under what circumstances pre-hospital fluid replacement therapy should be initiated if it is to maximise the survival chances of people who have suffered injuries as a result of trauma.”

The guidance recommends that only healthcare professionals who have been appropriately trained in advanced life-support techniques and pre-hospital care should administer intravenous fluid therapy in the pre-hospital setting.

## **Ends**

For more information contact Phil Ranson on 020 7067 5900, or mobile 0778 639 0068.

## **Notes to Editors**

### **About the NICE guidance**

1. NICE follows a process which allows consultees including patients and health professionals to submit evidence, nominate their own experts, be consulted on draft guidance and appeal if they feel the guidance is perverse, that NICE has exceeded its powers or if NICE has not followed the published process for its work.

### **About NICE**

2. NICE is part of the NHS. It is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on treatments and care for those using the NHS in England and Wales. Its guidance is for healthcare professionals and patients and their carers to help them make decisions about treatment and healthcare. For further information about NICE you can visit [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk).
3. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
  - the use of new and existing medicines and treatments within the NHS in England and Wales – technology appraisals.
  - the appropriate treatment and care of patients with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS in England and Wales – clinical guidelines.
  - whether interventional procedures used for diagnosis or treatment are safe enough and work well enough for routine use– interventional procedures.
4. NICE also funds three enquiries that undertake research into the way patients are treated to identify ways of improving the quality of care (the investigations are known as confidential enquiries).
5. NICE guidance and recommendations are prepared by independent groups that include professionals working in the NHS and people who are familiar with the issues affecting patients and carers.