

10 October 2008

### Concern over catheter use

Queensland Health is following up children who have had a specific type of catheter used in hospital treatment since September 2007 after potential complications have been discovered with its use.

Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young said all Queensland Health hospitals had been instructed to cease using the catheter until the cause of the potential complications is fully investigated.

The device is a type of PICC (Peripheral Inserted Central Catheter) line, a hollow thin tube inserted through the arm that leads to the heart to deliver antibiotics and other drugs to a patient.

“A small number of cases has been identified at three hospitals in which part of a wire used to insert the device has remained within children,” Dr Young said.

“To date, several children have had the wire removed successfully, without any adverse consequences, and others we know of are already being followed up.”

“All Queensland Health hospitals are now reviewing all cases where such a catheter has been used and will determine whether any children require any follow-up care. At this stage investigations have revealed a total of eight cases from Townsville, Royal Children’s and Mater Children’s hospitals.

“I understand that this issue will cause concern for many parents and their children who have had hospital treatment, but I would like to assure parents that we are not aware of any child who has suffered any long-term harm because of this issue.

“If a child has been in only overnight for a relatively minor condition or routine surgery, it is very unlikely they would have had this device used in their treatment. At this stage we believe this issue is restricted to children.

“We estimate that about 200 children are potentially affected and we will be following up all relevant cases. Children will be x-rayed and if necessary a procedure will be carried out to remove the wire.

“We will be tracing children who may have been affected and carrying out necessary examinations and possible procedures as quickly as we can, but parents who have concerns are urged to contact a special 24-hour information line we have established **(Phone 1800 509 220)**.”

“People can also phone 13 HEALTH, 13 43 25 84.

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“Urgent advice has been provided to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) who will investigate and decide on any national action,” Dr Young said.

“The manufacturer has also been advised of the issue.”

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