Ultrasound on the Acute Medical Unit: A mandatory skill for the acute physician!

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Background
We recommend that all Acute Medical Units (AMU) house an ultrasound scanner and that acute physicians are skilled to use this equipment in the acutely unwell patient. At City Hospital, a dedicated ultrasound was introduced to the department in 2011.

Our aim is to continue empowering the acute trainee through local ultrasound courses and re-assess training delivery from the results of this annual evaluation.

Methods
From 2011 until 2014, data was collected on operator use, type of scan and indication on 300 scans.

Results
Previous urgent diagnoses include severe right heart failure secondary to pulmonary emboli, pericardial effusion, and two cases of post-partum dilated cardiomyopathy. This led to prompt management and transfer to the Intensive Care Unit. With regards to vascular access, 6 scans were undertaken for peripheral cannulation. The highest operator use in this category was core medical trainees.

Diagnostic or interventional?

Number of scans

Scans by training grade

Indications for Ultrasound Scanning on AMU

Discussion
• Acute Medicine needs to own and be responsible for delivery of USS for the acutely unwell patient. Not only does it help with diagnostic and interventional procedures but most importantly it empowers the acute physician to deliver the best care possible for our patients.

• Our data shows that USS on the AMU improves the patients experience and journey decreases length of stay and efficiently provides seamless care when patients move onto specialty wards.

• City Hospital is a popular place for SpRs as they are accredited in FEEL/FICE as well as thoracic USS. They have 24/7 access to the USS machine with accredited, proficient acute physicians who are passionate in provision and ownership of this service.

Ultrasound Scanning at the Front Door
Quality assurance is vital in providing this service. Regular audit, external review and continuous training and education is mandatory in delivering high quality care. The yearly "USS at the Front Door" Course - RCP accredited aimed at Consultants and Registrars delivers common acute medical scenarios, lecture based teaching with hands on exposure to USS on patients with normal and pathological findings.

If interested in attending "USS at the front Door"
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