

National Review of Asthma Deaths - RCPCH Comment

Tuesday 6 May, 2014

Commenting on the National Review of Asthma Deaths (NRAD), Dr Hilary Cass, President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, said:

"In many ways asthma is a barometer of the whole system – from public health measures aimed at protecting children from developing illnesses, through to the management of conditions hospital. In the case of asthma, we're failing right across the board. We have a higher prevalence than other countries and are performing badly right up to the stage of treatment in hospital.

"Too many children are dying from asthma and in a country with one of the best health systems in the world, this is simply not good enough. Not only does the UK have higher death rates than European counterparts, there is also a five-fold variation in emergency admission rates for children with asthma across the country.

"Part of the problem is poor management of the condition at home and we need to be doing more to ensure children, parents and schools are better equipped to act quickly and prevent potentially life-threatening asthma attacks. But as healthcare professionals we also have to take responsibility for high standards of care not just when children are admitted to hospital with asthma, but also when they are discharged. Only a minority of children have an asthma plan to help manage their condition and it's gravely concerning that some healthcare professionals are unable to recognise how serious a patient's asthma really is.

"We have to act on the findings and recommendations of this important report – because the majority of asthma deaths are largely preventable."

Ends.

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