

## **Management of the Elderly Trauma Patient**

*Agreement between Departments of Trauma and Aged Care*

### **Purpose**

Following discussion between the Director of Aged Care and the Director of Trauma Services an agreement has been reached that aims to optimise the care of elderly trauma patients by facilitating the early involvement of the Aged Care team in their management.

### **Background**

When older people suffer injury the anatomical and physiologic changes associated with aging, as well as pre-existing co-morbidities increase the effects of trauma. These patients will be admitted under the care of the Trauma Service who will have primary responsibility for their daily management

The Aged Care service has expertise in managing elderly patients with chronic and complex medical/surgical problems who are unable to live safely under their current circumstances, and who need the expertise of the multidisciplinary Aged Care and allied health teams. A member of the Aged Care team will review elderly trauma patients each day and discuss with the Trauma Team recommendations for management.

### **Target patients**

Injured patients with any one or more of the following criteria:

- Elderly patients  $\geq 75$  years
- Cognitive impairment with MMSE score  $<18$  or suspected delirium
- Poor pre-morbid function– requiring numerous community services
- Pre-morbid mobility problems – history of 2 or more falls in the last 12 months or if the fall was the precipitant for the admission

### **Process**

It has been agreed that the OrthoGeriatrics registrar will review elderly trauma patients who fit the abovementioned criteria on the day of admission or as soon as practical the following day for patients admitted overnight.

- Between 0830 – 1630 on week days the Trauma Registrar will contact the OrthoGeriatrics registrar to request assessment of the patient in the Emergency Department or ward as soon as possible following initial review by the Trauma Team.
- By 0900 Mon – Fri the Trauma Intern will contact the OrthoGeriatrics registrar to inform them of any overnight admissions of elderly trauma patients and to request review.
- On weekends the trauma case manager will contact the rostered geriatrician (available through the emergency department or switchboard)
- Once the patient does not require any ongoing acute trauma related care/input, and where the patient cannot be discharged home due to chronic age-related issues, discussion will be had with the Aged Care Team about take over of care. This discussion will take place initially between the Trauma registrar and the OrthoGeriatrics registrar, but should the need arise direct Consultant to Consultant discussion can occur.

## **Management of Acute Medical Deterioration of elderly trauma patients**

### Business Hours

- Between 0800 and 1700 Mon – Fri the Trauma Intern will review any deteriorating older trauma patients and, following initiation of immediate management, will communicate concerns to the Trauma registrar. If required the registrar will liaise with the OrthoGeriatrics registrar to request urgent review.
- Further management of acutely unwell elderly trauma patients will be undertaken jointly between the Trauma Service and the Aged Care team with medical issues being co-ordinated by Aged Care. Both the Aged Care Consultant and the Director of Trauma should be notified.

### Outside business hours

- The surgical intern/RMO would contact the surgical registrar on call initially to review the patient. If required, assessment by the medical registrar will be requested and they may then wish to discuss management changes with the Trauma and Aged Care teams.

It is recognised that the workload for the OrthoGeriatrics registrar is heavy at times. The Aged Care Service is working with the General Medical Unit (GMU) to provide a consultative service for patients admitted with surgical issues. It has been agreed that the GMU registrar may be contacted on occasion to review elderly trauma patients should the OrthoGeriatrics registrar indicate that they are unable to provide timely review due to other commitments during business hours.

### **Revision and approval history**

Date	Revision number	Contact Officer (Position)	Date for revision
27/03/12		Kate Curtis (Trauma CNC)	October 2012

*Approved Prof Peter Smerdely (Aged Care Director) and Dr Mary Langcake (Trauma Director)*