

32nd World Pediatrics Conference

December 04-05, 2019 | Barcelona, Spain

A quality improvement project on a guide to atrial ECG

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The American Heart Association practice standards for electrocardiographic monitoring in hospitals recommend to record an atrial electrogram whenever tachycardia of unknown origin develops in a patient after cardiac surgery. Most of the rotational junior doctors have general pediatric background and their experience in post operative cardiac patients care is minimal. This project was carried out at Glenfield Hospital Leicester UK to promote awareness of junior doctors about safe and effective use of atrial ECG and also to build up a quick resource to perform atrial ECG especially in emergency conditions. A questionnaire was constructed to survey current awareness of doctors about atrial ECG. Also the participants understanding of existing trust guideline and the need of having a quick resource on method of performing atrial ECG was established. The survey included trainee doctors, Senior House Officers and Registrar, working in ICU and Cardiology ward and also Advanced Nurse Practitioners. Atrial epicardial pacing wires are commonly available in post-operative cardiac patients in ICU. However not all rotational doctors are aware of atrial ECG and some of them have no experience of doing atrial ECG. All doctors showed interest in learning the skill to perform atrial ECG. The Flow chart illustrating steps of doing atrial ECG were constructed and made available in ICU and Cardiology ward. Recommendation put forward to conduct teaching sessions on atrial ECG in induction programme for new rotational trainees. Flow charts were included in updated trust guidelines.