

Drug Overdose Short Stay Unit/Extended care Unit Admission (Adult)

Implementation Tool

DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA

- Intentional or non-intentional potentially dangerous ingestion or exposure to a pharmaceutical or chemical

SSU/ECU ADMISSION CRITERIA

- Known drug overdose
- At least 4 hour ED observation (acute cubicle) without deterioration
- Specific patients discussed with on-call toxicologist for potential SSU-Etox admission: e.g.:
 - Patients likely to require <48 hours observation or admission for their OD (e.g. resolution of sedative hypnotic drowsiness).
 - Stable patients requiring cardiac monitoring for certain ODs that may prolong QT (e.g. citalopram - needs 12 hours of monitoring, amisulpride - needs 16-24 hours).
 - Carbon monoxide exposures for high flow mask O2 with normal neurological exam.
 - Paracetamol OD: see specific guideline for SSU criteria
 - Other patients on case to case basis

SSU/ECU EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- Unstable vital signs
- Incomplete management plan
- Known ingestion of highly toxic or potentially fatal substance
- Sustained-release medication ingestion
- Patients requiring in-patient unit management (e.g; corrosive ingestion: Gastro-med)
- Suspected complication of poisoning (e.g. aspiration pneumonia, hypoxic brain injury, rhabdomyolysis)
- Need for decontamination procedures (e.g. whole bowel lavage)
- Abnormal neurological exam including risk of seizures, hallucinations, confusion or CGS <13.
- Cardiac arrhythmias (significant)
- Unstable respiratory status
- Ongoing suicidal intent / uncooperative with treatment
- Recommended patient
- Elderly deliberate self-poisoning

BASELINE INVESTIGATIONS

- UECr, Glucose
- 12-lead ECG
- Paracetamol level > 4hrs post ingestion
- Drug levels as appropriate
- Vital signs as per [Monitoring Vital Signs in the Emergency Department Procedure](#)

SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATIONS

- Serial 12-lead ECG
- Blood alcohol or other drug screening as appropriate
- Venous gases
- CXR if concern of aspiration pneumonia

PRESCRIBING GUIDELINES

- As required for specific overdose

HOME DISCHARGE CRITERIA

- Return of non-toxic lab values
- No change in normal exam
- Stable vital signs
- Safe psychosocial
- Discharge discussed/reviewed with on-call toxicologist

HOSPITAL ADMISSION CRITERIA

- ALL Elderly deliberate self-poisoning
- Likely length of stay > 48 hours
- Complication of poisoning (e.g. aspiration pneumonia, cerebral hypoxic insult, rhabdomyolysis, renal impairment)
- Toxic lab values requiring intervention

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial assessment and discharge summary complete on EMR Discharge prescription; patient information; certificates Ensure all allergies recorded in EMR 	
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RELATED PROCEDURE

[Emergency Department Short Stay Unit Admission and Operational \(Adult\)](#)

KEYWORDS

Drug, overdose, SSU, ECU, admission, adult

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