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18 September 2008

Dear Colleague,

Publication of the VTE risk assessment

I wrote to you in April 2007 about the recommendations of the expert working group on the prevention of venous thromboembolism (VTE) in hospitalised patients. One of the main recommendations was that medical patients should, as part of a risk assessment, be considered for thromboprophylaxis measures. A smaller implementation working group was set up immediately to take this forward.

We now have the first version of the VTE risk assessment available for use by hospitals. It is based on known risk factors from existing guidance and evidence, and it is intended for use on hospitalised patients, having the potential to prevent avoidable deaths from VTE – estimated at some 25,000 per year.

The risk assessment will be available to download from 19 September and can be found at www.dh.gov.uk/vte and I strongly commend its use to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Liam Donaldson'.

**SIR LIAM DONALDSON
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER**

Annex: Other relevant information

- Two VTE exemplar sites were established in September 2007, one in King's College Hospital (see <http://www.kingsthrombosiscentre.org.uk/>) and one in the independent sector at the London Clinic. Other exemplar sites in the network are on course to be launched this year and are likely to include North Lancs PCT, Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Addenbrookes Hospital.
- The VTE risk assessment will be included within **Map of Medicine** pathways and Map of Medicine will be including VTE in their forthcoming awareness raising campaign (we will be providing a link on the DH VTE web page to the Map of Medicine information as soon as it is published).
- The Royal College of Physicians and Royal College of General Practitioners will include VTE in regional workshops.
- The implementation working group are exploring trends in mortality from VTE within current Hospital Episode Statistics data with Imperial College London / Dr Foster.
- Safequalitycare (Imperial College London) won the tender from Connecting for Health to run a project considering VTE risk assessments and subjecting the Implementation Working Group risk assessment to validation by consultation and possible limited piloting. This work is likely to be complete by March 2009