



The Royal College of Emergency Medicine

November 2017

Safety Newsflash: Time Critical Medicines



Case report: Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) due to omission of insulin

- Patient with type 1 diabetes mellitus admitted to SAU with a suspected surgical abdomen. There was a 7 hour delay in the ED.
- Two doses of regular insulin had been omitted whilst the patient waited.
- A further dose was missed whilst awaiting clerking on SAU.
- Patient subsequently deteriorated; was found to have a BM of 35, ketones positive, VBG revealed acidosis (unrelated to presentation).
- Diagnosed with DKA requiring ICU.

Time Critical Medicines

Factors Causing Illness

Mitigation Methods

Insulins



Anti-epileptics



Anti-Parkinson's



Patients sometimes face delays in the ED.

Those awaiting specialty assessment, inpatient bed may not have important regular medications prescribed or given by the ED in error.

RCEM:

All patients should have time critical medications prescribed and administered whilst in the ED.

For other RCEM issued Safety Alerts and Safety Newsflashes see:

www.rcem.ac.uk/safetyalerts