The National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (NCEPOD) is a charity that works to make healthcare services better for the people who use them. We do this by collecting information from people who have used healthcare services. Our work has led to lots of positive changes in how healthcare is provided.

We collected information from hospitals to see how care was provided to people who needed a chest drain or pleural aspiration.

For more information please see:

THE FULL NCEPOD REPORT
OUR USEFUL RESOURCES PAGE

www.ncepod.org.uk



WHAT WE FOUND

There were variations in how pleural procedure services were organised across hospitals. This affected the availability of specialist support, particularly outside normal working hours.

There were differences in clinicians' confidence and competence in performing chest drain insertion and pleural aspiration. This was linked to variation in training, competency assessment, experience, supervision and ongoing support across organisations. It was noted that non-emergency procedures were often performed out of hours

There were variations in how chest drain insertion and pleural aspiration were undertaken and managed, including consent processes, safety practices and ongoing chest drain care.

Patients described the importance of receiving clear information, receiving adequate pain relief, being involved in decisions about their care, and having confidence in the team undertaking their procedure.

WHAT HEALTH SERVICES CAN DO

Ensure experienced decision-makers and clinicians with the appropriate skills are available when needed to support safe decision-making, avoid unnecessarily invasive procedures and provide safe care.

Develop care pathways and access to specialist support that reduce the need for chest drain insertion and pleural aspiration to be performed outside normal working hours.

Use standardised approaches to chest drain insertion and pleural aspiration, including procedure-specific consent processes and national patient safety standards.

Ensure there are clear plans for chest drain management, including pain relief, monitoring post-insertion, escalation of concerns and timely removal.

WHAT YOU AS A PATIENT/CARER CAN DO

Ask questions if you do not understand why a chest drain insertion or pleural aspiration is needed, what it involves, or what to expect before, during and after the procedure.

Work with your healthcare team to make decisions about your care and ensure you receive the information you need to feel informed and involved.

Tell your healthcare team if you are in any pain or discomfort at any point before, during or after the procedure, or if you have any concerns about your symptoms, recovery, or any problems following a chest drain insertion or pleural aspiration.

No question is too small or unimportant. The healthcare team wants to help you understand your admission to hospital and feel confident about your care. If you don't understand something, please keep asking until you do.