



The Royal College of Emergency Medicine

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Position statement

National Early Warning Score (NEWS) for Adult Patients attending Emergency Departments

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Failure to recognise the deteriorating patient can lead to avoidable clinical incidents. RCEM supports initial rapid measurement of vital signs for patients arriving at Emergency Departments (ED) and the repeat measurement of vital signs for selected patients in the ED.

A review of the national database of clinical incidents reported in ED has identified common themes of:

- Failure to recognize acute deterioration
- Failure to escalate physiological unstable patients to a doctor of sufficient seniority in the incoming team
- Unsafe transfer of physiologically unstable patients without adequate handover to the ward.

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) has led the development of the National Early Warning Score (NEWS). The score is based on physiological parameters and needs to be considered alongside the clinical presentation.

Within the ED, use of NEWS can be helpful in the transitions of care between teams, from ambulance to ED and ED to the inpatient speciality. This ensures everyone is clear about the physiological condition of the patient. In addition during periods of crowding, NEWS is helpful as a way of managing risk for boarded patients.

RCEM is aware that for many EDs, the use of NEWS is already standard practice and recommend that all EDs use NEWS.

Excellence in Emergency Care