

Sentinel Event Overview

What is a Sentinel Event (SE)?

- A SE is a patient safety event (not primarily related to the natural course of a patient's illness or underlying condition) that reaches a patient and results in:
 - Death
 - Severe harm (regardless of duration of harm)
 - Permanent harm (regardless of severity of harm)

Definitions

- **Permanent Harm:** An event or condition that reaches the individual, resulting in any level of harm that permanently alters and/or affects the individual's baseline health.
- **Severe Harm:** An event or condition that reaches the individual, resulting in life-threatening bodily injury (including pain or disfigurement) that interferes with or results in loss of functional ability or quality of life that requires continuous physiological monitoring and/or surgery, invasive procedure, or treatment to resolve the condition.

Types of Sentinel Events

- Suicide of a patient who is receiving care, treatment, or services in a staffed 24/7 setting or within 72 hours of discharge, including ED
- Unanticipated death of a full-term infant
- Abduction of any patient receiving care, treatment, or services
- Discharge of an infant to the wrong family
- Rape, assault leading to death, permanent or severe temporary harm of any patient, staff member/provider, visitor, or vendor while on KP property
- Homicide of any patient/staff member/visitor/vendor while on KP property, receiving or providing care/services
- Hemolytic transfusion reaction involving administration of blood or blood products having major blood group incompatibilities

Types of Sentinel Events (continued)

- Invasive procedure, including surgery, on the wrong patient, wrong site, wrong (unintended) procedure, or wrong implant.
- Unintended retention of a foreign object in a patient after surgery or other invasive procedure
- Severe neonatal hyperbilirubinemia (> 30mg/dL)
- Fluoroscopy resulting in permanent tissue injury-clinical/technical optimization not used or practice parameters not used
- Any elopement (that is, unauthorized departure) of a patient from a staffed around-the-clock care setting (including the ED), leading to death, permanent harm, or severe temporary harm to the patient
- Fire, flame, or unanticipated smoke, heat, or flashes occurring during an episode of patient care

Types of Sentinel Events (continued)

- Falls in a staffed around the clock care setting or fall in a care setting (not staffed around the clock) during time when staff are present resulting in:
 - Any fracture
 - Required consult/management or comfort care for neurological or internal injuries
 - Patient with coagulopathy who receives blood products as a result of a fall
 - Death or permanent harm as a result of injuries sustained from a fall
- Medication events meeting MERP classification of F-I

Types of Sentinel Events (continued)

- Any intrapartum maternal death or severe maternal morbidity
 - Within 24 hours of birth
 - Triggers for SE:
 - Transfusion of 4 units or more of blood products and/or
 - Admission at least overnight to ICU
- If indeterminate, treat as SE until investigation complete.

What to do if a Sentinel Event Occurs

- Take care of the patient
- Submit **UOR (Midas)** within **24 hours** of event
- Notify House Supervisor and unit manager, who should notify the Administrator on Call
- Situation management
- Preserve evidence
- Document the event objectively
- Communicate with MD, patient, family, leadership
- Take of each other—second victims

SE Investigation

- Interviews with those involved
 - To get their perspective
 - Allow to share/vent/explore their feelings
 - Build a timeline
 - Used to discover system issues, non-punitive
- Risk and Quality team draft preliminary cause map
 - Review with leadership and risk team
- Comprehensive Systematic Analysis
 - Get everyone involved together to look at systems issue and develop possible action plan
 - Review action plan with respective leaders
 - Follow up

SE Reporting

- National Quality
- Medical Executive Committee
- Quality
- Learnings shared

Questions?

If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

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Knowledge Check

Question 1

Which of the following events are Sentinel Events (check all that apply)?

- A. Patient burn from the use of an electrical device in the clinic to remove a skin lesion
- B. A piece of a disposable instrument left in the patient after skin closure
- C. Stage 2 skin ulcer on buttocks
- D. IV infiltrate on hand infusing Dopamine via peripheral IV
- E. Confused patient falls out of bed and has a fractured pinky finger as a result of the fall. Fracture only requires splinting.

Question 1 Answer

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D. IV infiltrate on hand infusing Dopamine via peripheral IV

E. Confused patient falls out of bed and has a fractured pinky finger as a result of the fall. Fracture only requires splinting.

Question 2

Following a potential Sentinel Event, which of the following action does **NOT** apply:

- A. Notify House Supervisor
- B. Submit UOR
- C. Notify MD
- D. Nurse to be transferred to another assignment for rest of shift
- E. Take care of the patient

Question 2 Answer

Following a potential Sentinel Event, which of the following action does **NOT** apply:

- A. Notify House Supervisor
- B. Submit UOR
- C. Notify MD
- D. Nurse to be transferred to another assignment for rest of shift
- E. Take care of the patient

Question 3

54-year-old female, new KP member, has first appointment with Behavioral Health. Previous history of major depressive disorder and anxiety. Has refused medications and prefers group therapy. She returns home to find her husband has left her. She is very distraught and overdoses on Fentanyl. Is this a Sentinel Event?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Question 3 Answer

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A. Yes

B. No

Question 4

Interviews following a potential Sentinel Event are used to gather information for termination/disciplinary action.

- A. Yes
- B. No

Question 4 Answer

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A. Yes

B. No

Question 5

An elderly patient on a blood thinner falls and hits her head on the floor. Head CT done and shows no fracture and small subdural hematoma immediately post fall. However, her Hgb drops from 10 (before the fall) to 7 two hours after the fall. MD orders 2 units to be given. Is this a Sentinel Event?

- A. Yes
- B. No

Question 5 Answer

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A. Yes

B. No

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Thank you.