Adverse event and Critical incident management and reporting guidance

RACGP GP Training

Introduction and intention

This document provides guidance for identifying adverse events (including critical incidents), and the requirements for reporting to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). This guideline relates to reporting by training site, supervisors, and registrars to the RACGP. This includes RACGP training programs – Australian General Practice Training (AGPT), Fellowship Support Program (FSP), Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS) and International Specialist program.

The RACGP works to ensure a transparent, fair, and supportive process whereby the integrity of the organisation and its accredited training sites is preserved, and incidents are responded to in a thoughtful and supportive manner.

Guideline intention

Adverse event (including critical incidents) reporting is not punitive, nor does it necessarily mean that there has been some failure in a training site's internal monitoring system. Quality improvement is at the heart of this activity.

This guideline intends to assist training sites, supervisors and registrars in the reporting process related to adverse events and critical incidents. It includes identifying whether an event is required to be reported to the RACGP. Definitions and reporting requirements are detailed.

Roles

This document provides guidance for identifying adverse events and critical incidents, and the requirements for reporting to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). This guideline relates to reporting by training site, supervisors, and registrars.

Role of training sites and supervisors

Training sites play a vital role in the delivery of training. Training sites support and monitor the day-to-day wellbeing and progress of registrars.

Training sites are responsible for ensuring a safe environment for doctors, staff and patients. There is an expectation that all training sites have internal risk management systems including procedures for dealing with 'near misses', 'adverse events' and 'critical incidents' and these will be adhered to, along with reporting of events to the RACGP. Training sites must also ensure that all staff (including registrars) are aware of their safe practices, who to advise should incidents or events occur and how they are reviewed and managed.

It is the responsibility of the training site and/or supervisor to report adverse events (including critical incidents) to the RACGP in line with the guidelines below. Evidence of adherence to this is necessary for training site accreditation.

Role of the registrar

Registrars are responsible to report any adverse event, near miss or critical incident that impacts on their training, their training site, or patients within their care.

Registrars are required to understand the risk management systems utilised by the training site and assist with appropriate review and management of issues.

Registrars are encouraged to discuss any issues impacting their well-being with their training coordinator.

Role of the RACGP

Under its Australian Medical Council requirements, the RACGP is responsible for ensuring that trainee safety and patient safety are protected. Reporting of Adverse events (including critical incidents) is an important strategy for meeting this responsibility. Furthermore, understanding trends in adverse events and issues impacting registrar provides the opportunity for quality improvement for all stakeholders involved. The reporting process enables the RACGP to effectively address the negative outcomes of an adverse event or critical incident and to mitigate the consequent risks.

The RACGP sees its relationship with training sites as a supportive one. Through supporting training sites, supervisors and registrars, the RACGP will provide timely assistance as required to remediate situations and promote a safe, positive clinical learning environment.

Definitions

Adverse events can be viewed as a continuum of impacts and severity. The consequences and impacts of any issue may be viewed differently from the perspective of a patient, a registrar, a supervisor or the RACGP. “Adverse events” is an overarching term with more serious events being subcategorised as a critical incident.

The following provides broad guidance on definitions. However, the reporter only needs to identify that an adverse event has occurred without defining further. All of the following must be reported to the RACGP.

Adverse events

An adverse event is any disruptive event that causes, or risks causing, significant harm to patients, registrars, GP supervisors, training site staff or associated stakeholders.

These may include events or circumstances including, but not limited to where:

- the registrar is deemed to be at risk
- aggressive behaviour or threats of violence occur
- the training site receives and responds to a complaint or notice of concern related to the registrar
- a near miss regarding a patient managed by the registrar
- an adverse event is impacting a patient managed by the registrar
- the training site has difficulties in its capacity to meet program requirements (staffing, systems, processes, etc)
- there is difficulty in resolving an issue, grievance or dispute that is impacting on training.

A **critical incident** is any adverse event that has resulted in a serious negative outcome for patients, registrars, GP supervisors, training site staff, the RACGP and/or its staff, program reputation or any combination of these.

Critical incidents include:

- serious personal injury or death of a registrar
- a serious negative outcome for a patient managed by the registrar
- concerns or issues in training site compliance with RACGP Standards for General Practice (5th edition)
- a significant complaint or issue that may result in reputational damage for the registrar, supervisor, training site or the RACGP
- supervisor or registrar notifications to Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) (mandatory or voluntary) or the placing of conditions, undertakings, reprimands or notations on their registration
- removal of a registrar from a training site under the RACGP’s registrar Safety and Well-being Policy.

Privacy

When dealing with adverse events, the RACGP employees and other parties will adhere to the National Privacy Principles, RACGP Privacy Policy and protect the confidentiality of those involved. All reports will be treated as confidential and maintained securely, regardless of whether the incident is deemed critical or not. Access to RACGP personnel is granted only as required to appropriately manage the incident and support the training site, supervisor or registrar.

Aggregated reported adverse event data used for quality improvement purposes is de-identified.

Training sites and supervisors must ensure that they adhere to Privacy legislation in submitting reports and attachments. No patient identifying information should be submitted eg patient name, patient progress notes. If necessary for reporting a deidentified summary of the situation should be submitted.

Reporting

Reporting requirements

All adverse events and critical incidents must be reported. Other issues and significant concerns are encouraged to be reported.

Training site, supervisors, practice managers and registrars are encouraged to discuss any issue or event of concern with the RACGP.

It is noted that general practitioners, employers and the RACGP (as an educational institution) have obligations under AHPRA mandatory reporting guidelines.

Reporting process

Training sites, supervisors and registrars can report an incident or event in the following ways:

- Utilising the training management system portal and adding details of the adverse event or incident.
- Completing the adverse event / critical incident report form and emailing to criticalincidents@racgp.org.au (if the training management system is unavailable).
- Via phone or in person to a member of the RACGP team e.g. training coordinator or medical educator.

Communication

For any critical incidents, it is expected the RACGP will receive the report without any unreasonable delay.

The RACGP system will immediately confirm lodgement of reports. A RACGP staff member will acknowledge receipt of each report within 3 business days.

The RACGP will review each report and escalate appropriately. Each report will be appropriately managed with the training site, supervisor and registrar. As a result of this review, the RACGP may:

- ask for additional information or clarification of information provided
- provide support as appropriate to the registrar
- work with the training site to support their risk management system to reduce subsequent risk
- request that the training site or registrar provide periodic reports on the circumstances where the incident may have an ongoing impact
- advise that the incident can be closed and no further action is required by the training site, supervisor or registrar

The intention of any ongoing communication is to support the training site and RACGP in meeting their obligation for safe and effective training delivery, to foster an increased understanding of issues impacting registrars and to reduce any future risk.

Related documents

- RACGP *Standards for general practice training* 3rd edition
- RACGP *Standards for general practice.* 5th edition
- AHPRA Guidelines for mandatory notifications
- AGPT accredited training site and supervisor agreement
- FSP individual program agreement
- FSP supervisor agreement
- FSP training site agreement
- Adverse event and critical incident report form