

Administration of incorrect vaccine to child
17HDC00512, 11 June 2018

*Registered nurse ~ Medical centre ~ Immunisation ~
Unauthorised vaccination ~ Right 4(1), 4(2)*

A 12-year-old girl attended a medical centre for her first dose of the Gardasil vaccine, but was given the Boostrix vaccine in error.

The registered nurse, who was to give the vaccine, asked the girl whether she had the vaccination previously, but did not state the name of the vaccine. The girl responded that she had not. Although her immunisation history showed that she had received the Boostrix vaccine already, the nurse did not scroll down far enough on the practice management system to see the entry.

The practice nurse became aware of the administration error when she updated the immunisation history. She discussed the issue with the girl, who agreed to have Gardasil administered in her other arm. Neither of the vaccines were administered under a standing order or prescription, and the practice nurse, who administered the vaccines, was not an authorised vaccinator at the time.

The practice nurse submitted an incident report to the Nurse Lead on the day of the incident, but the Nurse lead did not complete her section of the report until one month later.

Findings

By failing to identify and administer the correct vaccine, the practice nurse did not provide services with reasonable care and skill and, accordingly, breached Right 4(1). By failing to comply with the Medicines Act 1981, the practice nurse also breached Right 4(2).

By allowing the practice nurse to administer vaccines without appropriate authorisation, the medical centre breached Right 4(2).

The Nurse lead was criticised for not completing the incident form in a timely manner or discussing the incident at the following quality meeting.

Recommendations

The practice nurse and the medical centre provided letters of apology to the girl and her mother.

It was recommended that the Nurse lead provide HDC with evidence that she has completed training on the electronic recording of accidents and events.

It was recommended that the medical centre update its vaccination policy and report on the steps taken to ensure that it complies with legislation and professional standards relating to the administration of prescription medicine.