

Falls and head injury decision plan

Falls, with and without head injury, are common in aged care. It is important that people keep mobile, and this is balanced with the risk of injury from a fall

In recent years it has become routine to send people from aged care after they have fallen and hit their head. This is because of fear of litigation and a belief that every older person should have a brain scan because the risk of bleeding is high.

However it is important to consider two things:

Whether a bleed on the scan is something that would change the care plan

The upheaval and stress caused to the resident in being taken to/from hospital, spending time on a trolley in the emergency department, and if they have confusion or dementia, they may need sedation for the scan.

If a resident would not be considered for neurosurgery, then there is probably no benefit in sending them to hospital for investigation of a head injury.

What can we do?

Prioritise the resident's comfort

Check them regularly for symptoms such as pain, dizziness and nausea, and treat these.

Consider the ongoing safety of medications such as blood thinners and others that may contribute to falls

If the resident does deteriorate, Staff will contact the GP who will make a plan based on the advance care directive after discussing with next of kin.

If I/my relative has a head injury:

I want (them) to be taken to hospital for a scan, and if there is a brain bleed, to be considered for surgery at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

I want (them) to be taken to hospital for a scan, but not to have further treatment for any bleed found on the scan.

I want (them) to stay at the facility and be monitored with regular pulse and blood pressure checks even if this will not change how the head injury is treated

I want (them) to have regular checks for symptoms only (headache, pain, nausea, dizziness) and for these to be treated.

If it is clear the head injury is serious and I/they are deteriorating I would like:

All comfort care

To reconsider my decision and go to hospital