



Clinical Support Discussion – 25th July 2023 (Ref 316)

Discussion - health & safety issues at work

In today's clinical support discussion, we reflected on health & safety issues at work, including falls in or near the clinic, first aid response, portable appliance testing (PAT), and how to mitigate your risks as a healthcare practitioner.

Specific incidents experienced by practitioners included patients slipping down the stairs at the practice, one of whom ended up with a worse knee problem than when they came in, and a patient who, on dressing after a treatment managed to put both legs in the one trouser leg, leading to a spectacular fall, culminating in a broken nose and concussion! Common hazards around the clinic that were mentioned were driveways and steps, stairs, electrical appliances, and sharp corners/objects.

How do we respond to these incidents as trained healthcare practitioners? It's all too tempting to try and diagnose the tissue-causing symptoms, but more appropriate that we put the first aid hat on, first and foremost, and decide whether the patient needs emergency back-up, or basic first aid care.

So, how do we mitigate these problems? The following suggestions were made:

- Carry out a risk assessment of your practice, to highlight any potential hazards.
- Ensure that all staff know where to find the first aid kit, accident book, and the location of fire exits, and fire extinguishers etc.
- Install handrails as necessary.
- Carry out portable appliance testing (PAT), although the frequency of testing is not stipulated, and may be informed by your public liability insurance. There is some useful information at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/faq-portable-appliance-testing.htm>
- Cover sharp, hazardous corners or objects; one attendee recommended using Sugru, an adhesive repair putty, to prevent injury.

- Ensure that plinths are maintained; Trimbio, for example offers a plinth maintenance service but there are many other companies that provide similar services.

Above all, make sure that your public liability insurance is up-to-date, and covers what you think it does. And if you don't like reading the small print, tune in to the next APM lunchtime broadcast on Monday 31st July, to hear from Nick Elwell, who has plenty of advice for you in that area . . .

Linking these cases with the OPS Themes

B - Knowledge, skills and performance

B1 You must have and be able to apply sufficient and appropriate knowledge and skills to support your work as an osteopath.

B4 – You must be able to analyse and reflect upon information related to your practice in order to enhance patient care.

C - Safety and quality in practice

C5 – You must ensure that your practice is safe, clean and hygienic, and complies with health and safety legislation.

Linking this case with the Chiropractic Code

Principle A – Put the health interests of the patient first

A6 Treat patients in a hygienic and safe environment.

Principle G – Maintain, develop and work within your professional knowledge and skills

G1 Keep your knowledge and skills up to date, taking part in relevant and regular learning and professional development activities that aim to maintain and develop your competence and improve your performance and the quality of your work.