

News Release

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DCH hip fracture mortality rate among lowest in the country

Dorset County Hospital is rated among the best in the country for dealing with hip fractures.

The hospital's hip fracture mortality rate is one of the lowest in the country according to the latest annual National Hip Fracture Database report by the Royal College of Physicians.

DCH dealt with 330 hip fractures during 2018. Of these, 16 people died within 30 days of sustaining the fracture. At 4.9%, the hospital had one of the lowest mortality rates of the 177 trauma units across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, where the average rate was 6.1%.

Hip fractures are the most common reason for admission to orthopaedic wards, according to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), mainly affecting older people who may suffer from osteoporosis, or weak bones.

Those who break their hip are at increased risk of suffering potentially fatal complications, including infections, pneumonia, and cardiovascular conditions such as heart failure or strokes.

The National Hip Fracture Database was established in 2007, and examines the quality of patient care across hospitals using a series of key performance indicators. Since then, deaths within a month of a hip fracture have halved, with around 4,000 people dying during 2018.

Medical Director at Dorset County Hospital Professor Alastair Hutchison said: "Dorset County Hospital deals with around 26 hip fractures per month, which are usually caused by a fall. Falls are very common among older people, especially in people aged 80 and over who may have reduced vision or mobility and balance problems.

"Sadly around one in 16 people who suffer a hip fracture will die within the following 30 days, but the chance of this happening can be reduced by rapid hip replacement and immediate physiotherapy so that the patient is back on their feet within 36 to 48 hours.

"At Dorset County Hospital our time from fall to operation is consistently good at around 25 hours compared to the national average of 33 hours, and only around one in 18 patients die within the first 30 days after fracture, which is again significantly better than the national average.

“Other indicators of quality of care that we monitor are early assessment by physiotherapists, nutritional assessment and assessment by a doctor trained in Elderly Medical Healthcare - all of which are particularly important for Dorset’s increasingly elderly population.”

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For more information please contact the Dorset County Hospital communications team on 01305 253394 or 254683, or email communications@dchft.nhs.uk