SUMMARY

Bath and shower seating equipment may entrap genitalia creating the risk of serious injury. Precautions should be taken to eliminate this risk.

BACKGROUND

1. Bath and shower seating equipment may have drainage holes/slots which have the potential to entrap genitalia, leading to pain/serious injury. Types of equipment which may present this risk include, but may not be limited to, bath boards, bath benches, bath seats, bath lifts, bath hoists, shower seats, shower chairs, shower benches, shower stools, shower and changing benches (or stretchers) and foldaway shower seats.

2. Incidents continue to be reported in which male genitalia have become entrapped in the drainage holes of a variety of bath or shower seating equipment. These incidents resulted in cuts, lacerations and testicular bruising. In several cases users have had to be freed by the Fire Service. Similarly, an incident has been reported involving an elderly woman with a rectal prolapse which became trapped in the holes of a bath hoist seat.

3. The size, shape and position of drainage holes/slots influences the risk of entrapment. Cracked and distorted seats can exacerbate the problem. Additionally, plastic seats may distort under the weight of a patient, increasing the risk of entrapment.

4. British Standard BS EN 12182:1999 Technical aids for disabled persons - General requirements and test methods requires that, to prevent genital entrapment, holes and clearances between parts shall be less than 8mm or more than 75mm. However, it may be necessary in certain circumstances, irrespective of aperture dimensions, to place material over shower/bath seats to prevent flesh or anatomy passing through.


ACTION

6. This notice should be brought to the attention of all appropriate managers, staff, users and their carers.

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7. All bath and shower seating equipment should be identified and checked to determine whether or not the size, shape and position of the drainage holes/slots of existing equipment present a risk of user entrapment.

8. Any bath or shower seats which exhibit signs of cracking or distortion should be withdrawn from use.

9. Where the shape, size and/or position of drainage holes/slots present a possible risk of entrapment, consideration should be given to placing a towel or other material between the seat and the user to eliminate the risk. In the longer term, consideration should be given to the use of alternative equipment.

10. Those responsible for the purchase and issue of bath and shower seating equipment should take into account the potential for user entrapment.

11. Those responsible for the issue of bath and shower seating equipment should provide carers and users with instructions for use and information on avoiding any risks associated with its use.

12. Care staff and carers should ensure that the instructions for use are available and are followed. In particular, the maximum user weight of the equipment should not be exceeded.

ENQUIRIES

Enquiries on specific equipment should be directed to the appropriate manufacturer/supplier.

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