Appendix 14 Post mortem care and examination

Post-mortem examination

A post-mortem examination on a suspected, probable or confirmed case should not be carried out unless considered absolutely essential by either the medical or legal authority responsible for the case. A post-mortem examination on a person known to have died of EVD exposes staff to unwarranted risk and should not be performed.

In the event that a post-mortem examination is required it should be performed by operators using the highest level PPE appropriate for high risk infectious diseases, as per accepted forensic medicine procedures. Aerosol formation must be avoided (e.g. electrically powered cutting instruments must not be used). All solid and liquid waste must be decontaminated with disinfectant solution or autoclaved, then incinerated. After the post-mortem has been completed the room must be thoroughly cleaned with disinfectant solution.

Where a patient suspected of having EVD dies prior to a definitive diagnosis being made, it may be necessary on public health grounds to conduct limited diagnostic testing after death to establish or eliminate the diagnosis of EVD.

Disposal of the deceased

State and territory public health regulations specify the requirements for handling of bodies for EVD. Requirements under the regulation may include:

- A person must, when carrying out any procedure on a body, comply with the guidelines specified in Part B of the Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare published by the National Health and Medical Research Council.
- A person must, when placing a body in a bag or wrapping a body, comply with a particular infection control policy.
- The body of a dead person is not removed from a place unless:
  - the body has been placed and secured in a bag or wrapping in a manner that prevents the leakage of any bodily exudate or other substance, and
  - the name of, or an identification of, the dead person is clearly and indelibly written on the top outer surface of the bag or wrapping, and
  - if the person has reason to believe that the body is infected with a prescribed infectious disease—the bag or wrapping is clearly marked as appropriate.

Bodies with a prescribed infectious disease must not be embalmed or made available for viewing.

The Hospital infection control team should work closely with the relevant funeral director to ensure that all appropriate infection control measures are implemented.

Staff wearing appropriate PPE must place the body of a confirmed or suspected EVD patient in a leak-proof double body bag. Absorbent material must be placed between each bag, and the bag sealed and disinfected with a 1,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite solution or other appropriate disinfectant.

The body must be cremated or buried in a sealed casket as soon as possible.
Persons who dispose of the body must take the same personal protection precautions outlined for medical and laboratory staff.