Safety Alert October 2021

Subject: Venepuncture Process

UNSW Safety are issuing a Safety Alert to remind staff and students that blood collection must occur in the correct facility type/location.

Background:

An incident occurred where a worker had witnessed evidence of blood being collected from human volunteers in a side room of a PC2 laboratory, no one was injured.

• The investigation identified:
  • the room was not a designated blood collection location
  • the area was not the room identified for blood collection in the Human Ethics application
  • the research group did not have their own specific protocol for blood collection
  • researchers involved had not completed relevant training on the current Safe Work Procedure (SWP) for blood collection
  • The vaccination status of the venepuncturist was not checked by the supervisor prior to blood collection

Actions taken following incident:

• an investigation into the incident was conducted as per UNSW procedures
• the supervisor will personally supervise all further venepuncture by the research group
• the designated venepuncture room as listed in the SWP and Human Ethics application will be used for any further blood collection
• venepuncturists will all be confirmed as having read and declared the SWP and group’s protocol for venepuncture and having relevant vaccinations prior to any blood collection taking place
• DVCR RECS Human Ethics were notified of the breach in protocol

What is recommended going forward:

• all staff involved in venepuncture should be fully trained in their group’s protocols and SWP
• all venepuncturists must be fully trained via an approved course
• the vaccination status of the venepuncturists must be confirmed prior to any blood collection
any blood collection should comply with Human Ethics application requirements including the location of blood collection

the principal researcher implements a thorough checking process to ensure that every researcher is fully aware of correct workflows for their procedures

supervisors are trained in and fulfil their responsibilities as detailed in Health and Safety Responsibility, Authority and Accountability Procedure

Also refer to HS435: Immunisation Guideline and HS651: Risk determination of human biological material - Guidelines

Further Information: safety@unsw.edu.au