

Nursing & Health Recognising the Acutely Ill Child

Survival Guide



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Angela Lee and Amanda Miller

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Nursing & Health Survival Guide

Recognising the Acutely Ill Child

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The importance of early recognition of acute illness in children

An analysis of patient deaths (NPSA 2007) highlighted the failure of nursing and medical staff to recognise early deterioration in patients as contributing to delays in summoning and initiating effective intervention with appropriate urgency. With specific reference to the care of children, the report *Why Children Die* (CEMACH 2008, Key Finding 3) identified delay and problems in recognising serious illness in children as a concern. The message is clear: **early recognition of acute illness in children may help to improve patient outcomes and may save lives.**

Accurate and prompt assessment is required in order to:

- provide an accurate baseline for comparison of future observations
- contribute to the accurate diagnosis of the child's condition
- ensure early recognition of the acutely ill child
- promptly spot deterioration of the child's condition
- trigger early review and effective management of the child's condition.