

Abstract- Mandible Fractures- A Simple Adjunct to Inform Consent

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Abstract : Litigation against surgeons and hospitals continues to increase in Western countries. While verbal consent is all that is required legally, it has for a long time been considered that written consent offers proof of discussion and interaction between the surgeon and the patient. Inadequate consenting of patients continues in the United Kingdom leaving surgeons and Health Trusts open to litigation. We present a standardised consent form which improves patient autonomy and engagement. The General Medical Council recommends that all material risks relevant to the patient are discussed and recorded prior to undergoing surgery, regardless of how likely they are to occur. Current literature was reviewed to evaluate complications associated with surgical management of mandible fractures. Analysis of risks on 52 consent forms were analysed within the Glasgow OMFS department, leading to a procedure-specific form being designed and implemented. This audit showed that the documentation of risks on consent forms was extremely variable- with uncommon risks not being recorded. Interestingly, not a single consent form was found which highlighted all the risks associated with mandible fractures. Our re-audit data confirms 100% of risks being discussed when a procedure specific form is utilised. Our hope, is to introduce further forms for inclusion on the BAOMS website and peripheral distribution. The forms are quick and easy to print and leave more time for consultation with the patient. Whilst we are under no illusion that the forms may not decrease the incidence of intended litigation, we feel confident that they will decrease the chances of it being successful.

Keywords : consent, litigation, mandible fracture, surgery

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