Post-dialysis hyponatraemia

3 patients who had dialysed at the same dialysis unit have been admitted to hospital over a 2 week period with low serum sodium levels: 126, 127, & 128 mmol/l. The patients had presented with nausea and malaise, confusion, and a fit. This prompted review of the routine monthly bloods which showed that a group of patients had abnormal sodium results: pre-dialysis sodium levels approximately 138 mmol/l, but post-dialysis sodium levels were below 130. This was with dialysis machines calibrated to a sodium of 136 mmol/l.

Investigation has highlighted that the same dialysis machines had been used by these patients. These machines were immediately quarantined. Subsequent analysis has demonstrated that the conductivity was low, but the machines had not alarmed whilst in use. The machines were last calibrated between 3 months and 15 months ago.

The company running this dialysis unit, the manufacturer, and the MHRA have been informed.

Action

- We suggest that who have patients with post-dialysis hyponatraemia check the conductivity of their machines and patient post dialysis serum sodium levels.

- We would welcome feedback to whether any other units have had similar occurrences.

Please submit comments, solutions, and personal experience to:

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