

Investigation into post mortem cardiac device interrogation

Request for Information

To garner a comprehensive understanding of the practices and data surrounding patients with cardiac devices, we kindly request the following information:

Q1	How many patients pass through your morgue each year?	2123 in 2023
Q2	Approximately what proportion of these have a cardiac implantable device in situ? (PPM, ICD, ILR)	116 in 2023
Q3	Does the hospital morgue also take deaths from the community, or is it for inpatients only?	both
Q4	Is there a cardiac physiology department on site at your hospital?	YES
Q5	If a patient has a cardiac device in situ, is it routine practice for a device check to be undertaken after death?	NO
Q6a	If yes, is the information regarding rhythm/therapies at the time of death routinely added to the patient's notes/hospital record?	YES
Q6b	If yes, is the information regarding rhythm/therapies at the time of death routinely passed on to the clinical team?	NO
Q7	If no and this is not routine practice, are there ever exceptions to this, i.e., occasions where a post-death device check is requested by the clinical team?	YES
Q8	If yes, please elaborate (for example, how often or under what circumstances this occurs).	When a request is received to deactivate an ICD in the mortuary Cardiac Physiologist attend to permanently switch therapies off making it safe for cremation. We scan in the deactivation evidence to patients notes. We don't check pacemakers post death and have never been asked to. It is not regular practice.

We welcome any additional information or comments that might help in our investigation.

Device is only checked if an ICD and the Cardiac team attend to deactivate for cremation purposes. They record all therapies are off. I cannot confirm what happens with that information as they take it away with them.

All ICD deactivations performed in the mortuary are printed and the evidence of all therapies deactivated are scanned to the patients notes.

We appreciate your assistance and the time taken to provide this information. Your insights are invaluable.