

DEATH REVIEW WITHOUT TOXICOLOGY

ISSUE

Significant delays in toxicology being a barrier to timely death review

PROCESS AND CONSIDERATIONS

The State Child Death Review and Prevention Team consulted with Oregon's State Medical Examiner's Office and recommends county teams consider the following factors when deciding whether to conduct a review in the absence of toxicology:

- The benefits of a closer to real time death review
- There is a lot of known information in the absence of toxicology results
- Most post-mortem autopsy information is usually available within 24 hours
- it is only occasional that toxicology results impact the findings
- When toxicology results create suspicion for child abuse, medical examiners are required to report to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline. County death review teams include child welfare representatives and a system can be put in place with the medical examiner representative and Child Welfare representative to follow up if significant information is obtained through toxicology.

GUIDANCE

County teams may conduct a review in the absence of toxicology. It is recommended to first consider the above to make case specific determinations about what is reasonable. A plan to follow up may include notification to the team when toxicology is complete, review of the toxicology at that time and determination of whether the new information impacts the team conclusions, findings, or recommendations and amend the National Fatality Review – Case Reporting System (NFR-CRS) data entry if needed. Contact Robyn Ellis if you require assistance with the amending the data entered in the NFR-CRS.