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VENOUS THROMBO- EMBOLISM

INTRODUCTION

Venous thromboembolism (VTE) may present as deep venous thrombosis, or pulmonary embolism, or both. Pulmonary embolism often results from asymptomatic VTE.

While most GPs will not have the resources in the primary care setting to confirm suspected VTE, they have an important role in identifying potential thrombotic events in the community, and triaging appropriately.

All GPs should be familiar with the clinical decision rules and care pathways which will assist this. Some GPs manage VTE themselves with direct access to investigation.

GPs are also well placed to advise patients embarking on travel who are concerned about the risk of 'blood clot'.

The aims of this module are:

- To help GPs identify patient groups at risk of VTE and understand the pitfalls involved.
- To increase confidence in advising on travel-related thrombosis and appropriate thromboprophylaxis.
- To review the management of superficial thrombophlebitis, which can co-exist with (and predispose to) deep venous thrombosis.

This module does not cover anticoagulation issues (such as the prescribing of warfarin) in great detail. The focus is on diagnosis and immediate management of VTE.