Australian hospital accidentally declares 200 patients dead

August 14 2014

An Australian hospital apologised "unreservedly" Thursday after sending out notices to the doctors of more than 200 patients telling them they had died instead of being discharged.

The error by Austin Hospital in Melbourne was spotted within hours and the doctors were contacted, but not before at least one had called a family member to express their condolences, the Herald Sun newspaper reported.

Austin Health, which runs the [hospital](#), said the notices—which were sent on Wednesday, July 30—were a result of "[human error](#)" after changes to a death notification template were saved to the standard discharge template.

"On recognising the error on the Wednesday morning, Austin Hospital immediately contacted all GP clinics affected," Austin Health spokeswoman Taryn Sheehy said in a statement.

"We apologised unreservedly to affected clinics who, for the most part, were very understanding about the error."

Sheehy added that [patient care](#) was not affected, but the president of the Australian Medical Association's Victoria state branch, Tony Bartone, said the blunder was "unacceptable".

"IT issues must not undermine patient care or trust in the Victorian

healthcare system," he said in a statement.

"Many of these GPs have long relationships with these patients and their families.

"It would have been distressing to receive such a fax, especially relating to the unexpected death of children and teenagers."

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Citation: Australian hospital accidentally declares 200 patients dead (2014, August 14) retrieved 6 May 2024 from
https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-08-australian-hospital-accidentally-declares-patients.html