

Hong Kong College of Emergency Medicine
Policy on the use of bedside focused emergency ultrasound

Emergency ultrasound (EUS) means application of ultrasound by emergency physicians (EPs) to help in the immediate management of patients in emergency department (ED).

EUS can help in answering specific clinical questions, such as “is hemoperitoneum present” in trauma cases, or “is aortic aneurysm present” in a patient with backache. EUS can also give guidance in certain invasive procedures such as central vein catheterization. In some scenarios such as shock, EUS can guide the therapeutic choices such as fluid or inotrope, or both. Studies have shown that proper use of EUS by trained EPs can reduce both mortality and morbidity of patients.

Hong Kong College of Emergency Medicine supports the following principles concerning the use of EUS in ED:

- EUS is a bedside diagnostic tool to help in managing patients in ED. It is a focused, targeted scan performed by EP in order to answer specific clinical questions, to guide the management of critically ill patients or serves as guidance in some invasive procedures done in ED
- ED should strive to have EUS capability available in a timely manner, preferably 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Clinical use of ultrasound involves training of both cognitive and psychomotor skills. A structural comprehensive program and a clear training pathway can facilitate the learning of this diagnostic modality
- Application of ultrasound is highly operator dependent. Systems in credentialing, quality improvement and risk management are strongly advised to be set up in ED with EUS capability in order to ensure the safe and effective use of this diagnostic tool
- Research in EUS should be strongly encouraged to support further development in the field
- At least one designated EP should be responsible for overseeing the system of EUS within the ED
- EUS would become an integral part of emergency medicine residency training program and practicing EPs are encouraged to acquire the knowledge of skills in EUS through proper training