



MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
SINGAPORE

MH 70:14

MOH Circular No. 149/2021

18 October 2021

Please refer to Distribution List

## ENDOSCOPIC SPINE SURGERY PERFORMED BY ANAESTHETISTS

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has recently reviewed the issue of anaesthetists performing Endoscopic Spine Surgery (ESS).

2. The Singapore Medical Council (SMC) 2016 Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines (ECEG) Section A3 (“Practising within competence, maintaining and improving performance, and offering the current standard of care”) states that medical practitioners must “practise within the limits of (his) own competence” and “must not engage in unsupervised practice of an area of medicine without having the appropriate knowledge and skills or the required experience”.

3. As ESS procedures are complex surgical procedures, ESS should only be performed by accredited spine surgeons and neurosurgeons who have completed accredited orthopaedic or neurosurgical training programmes respectively, or in the presence of an accredited spine surgeon or neurosurgeon who has completed the relevant training programme. Anaesthetists should not perform ESS independently without the presence of any spine surgeons or neurosurgeons.

4. Please ensure that the contents of this circular are brought to the attention of all relevant personnel in your institution for compliance. Should medical practitioners be found to be non-compliant, MOH and the relevant Professional Boards may take enforcement/disciplinary actions as appropriate.

Thank you.

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