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For the attention of all health workers involved in carrying out COVID 19 testing.

Subject: Nasopharyngeal Swab: Risk of epistaxis in Patients with Hereditary Haemorrhagic Telangiectasia (HHT).

BACKGROUND

- HHT is a rare autosomal dominant disease that causes vascular malformations in many major organs.
- In particular, telangiectases of the nasal mucosa cause recurrent epistaxis in 96% of patients.
- During the taking of a naso-pharyngeal swab for COVID 19, a massive epistaxis could be triggered, potentially requiring subsequent nasal tamponade, specialised surgery and hospitalisation.

RECOMMENDATION

Despite a lower diagnostic sensitivity, it is advisable to perform an oropharyngeal swab only in HHT patients, to assess the status of possible COVID19 infection , omitting a nasopharyngeal swab. This will place the patient at a lower risk of serious episodes of epistaxis and their potential consequences, such as the need for blood transfusion or invasive procedures ranging from prolonged nasal tamponade to endovascular embolization.

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