

Ageism blamed as doctors miss serious injuries among elderly

AN "ageist" approach to medicine has been blamed for the failure to detect life-threatening injuries in the elderly.

Dr Andy Eynon, an intensive care consultant at Southampton General Hospital, said that patients over 65 with major trauma were being "overlooked" after research found injuries were missed in a quarter of patients in this group.

The study, which evaluated trauma care among the over-65s in the south central region, showed 67 out of 282 patients reviewed between April 2012 to August 2014 suffered a missed injury or delayed diagnosis — despite 43 per cent presenting with predictable signs

38pc

Proportion of spinal trauma injuries missed among the over-65s in the study of the NHS South Central region

of major trauma. The most commonly missed injuries, according to the study, were spinal (38 per cent) and head (25 per cent).

During the past three years in Southampton, admissions among the over-65s as a result of accidents and falls have more than doubled, going from 88 in April 2012-13 to 211 in April 2014-15.

Dr Eynon said: "The development of trauma networks across the country in 2012 has been a revelation, saving hundreds more lives a year, yet the elderly population seems to have been forgotten amid the successes."

Dr Laura Tompsett, the study leader, said many health care professionals were "simply not thinking trauma" when it came to the over-65s.

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