Development of an online system to direct ENT referrals?

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Abstract

Background

ENT is a varied specialty with procedures ranging from minute to facial resections. Rapid access clinics are held to manage ENT cases on an out-patient basis. It is important to streamline patients to appropriate clinics to ensure optimal patient care. Our audit aimed to introduce an online system to make it easy for GPs, A+E and ward doctors to refer ENT patients to our rapid access clinic.

Methods

We looked at the type of referrals that were made to the ENT rapid access clinic in July 2019 and then in September 2019. There was a marginal improvement in adherence to our referral guidelines. Through more education and awareness, we were able to bring up the adherence and showed a decrease in inappropriate referrals when we ran the third cycle of the audit throughout February 2020.

Results

Between July and September 2019, the number of inappropriate referrals that came through were the same. But the number of inappropriate referrals from A+E came down by 6%. After more education, we reaudited this as a third cycle early in 2020 for a month and found a significant reduction in the number of inappropriate referrals.

Conclusion

In a time when clinics are overburdened and appointments are hard to come by, we must ensure that appointments made should be for the right indication to save time and effort. An online referral system combined with adequate education ensures success with regards to adherence to the referral process.