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An Audit evaluating local compliance with NICE NG12 suspected cancer: recognition and referral pathway at Bridgewater NHS Foundation Trust Community Dental Services

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Background: Dentists have a responsibility to thoroughly assess the head and neck area for patients which enables them to help identify patients with signs or symptoms that could be caused by cancer.

Aims:

Evaluate local compliance with Nice Guidelines (NG12) for suspected cancer: recognition and referral pathway across the Community Dental Services at Bridgewater NHS Trust at Oldham, Rochdale and Bury Boroughs (ORB).

Identify potential areas for improvement.

Analyse a baseline staff questionnaire regarding current practices.

Results:

- None of the patients met 100% of the criteria for suspected cancer referrals.
- 13.3% of patients that were referred had confirmed cancer that we are aware of.
- 100% of referrals were sent due to signs/symptoms that conform to the NICE NG12 guidelines.
- There was 100% compliance with documenting patient symptoms.
- 10% of patients had no mention of their cancer risk factors in their records.
- 13% of patients had no documented consent for their urgent referral.
- 37% of patients had no clinical documentation of further information provided to them.
- 13.3% of patients who had suspected cancer referrals sent were followed up by us within 2 weeks.
- For 33.3% of the patients referred didn't heard back from the specialist department.

Discussion: We should address inconsistencies identified with clinical record keeping, addressing risk factors, gaining valid consent and the follow-up process both locally and from specialist services. The staff survey identified staff lacked confidence in identifying suspicious lesions and varied awareness of NG12 requirements.

Biography

Iffah Zaman is a General Dental Practitioner with experience in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and Community Dentistry

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