Closed Loop Audit Assessing Knowledge of Common Imaging Procedures Among Ward Staff at Northwick Park Hospital

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Background: Undergoing radiological investigations is a stressful time for patients. Patients benefit from advance information on the procedures that they are to undergo. Therefore good understanding of imaging procedures by ward staff helps patients. It can reduce anxiety and confusion and potentially improve image quality. Knowledge of procedures also ensures satisfactory patient preparation, avoiding wasted appointments through improper patient preparation.

Standard: All trained nurses and health care assistants (HCAs) should have adequate knowledge of common imaging procedures relevant to their patient population and any preparatory requirements for the investigations.

Target: Dryden ward at Northwick Park Hospital consisting of HDU, acute medical, and general medical beds. Target of 100% knowledge.

Method: An initial audit followed by 5 week educational poster intervention, then re-audit. In both audits a questionnaire was circulated to all nursing and HCA staff at Dryden ward. The questionnaire consisted of 21 questions/subquestions assessing key knowledge in common CT, Ultrasounds (US), and MRI imaging.

Results of first cycle: Data from 20 completed questionnaires analysed. 50% correctly answered question regarding method of CT head scans, 55% correctly answered questions regarding preparation for non-contrast CT scans, 80-95% correctly answered questions regarding contrast CT scans. 55% believed US use light waves to create imaging. 40% believed MRI scans use more radiation than CT scans.

Results of second cycle: Data from 20 completed questionnaires analysed. This cycle showed improved knowledge in 15 out of 21 questions/subquestions when compared to cycle one.

Conclusion: It is important for ward staff to have adequate knowledge of common imaging procedures that their patients will undergo. There is a substantial need for further education such as in the form of educational posters or other interventions to achieve this. Ultimately, improvement in knowledge will help alleviate patient anxiety and confusion and ensure appropriate patient preparation for imaging.

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