Title:
Optimising Consent Documentation for Paediatric MRI and Elective Procedures: A Quality Improvement Audit to Enhance Imaging Safety and Governance

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Introduction

Valid informed consent is fundamental to safe, patient-centred care and supports shared decision-making between healthcare professionals and families. Paediatric MRI procedures, particularly those requiring general anaesthesia, require clear documentation of risks, benefits, alternatives and parental concerns. This audit assessed compliance with consent documentation standards and identified opportunities to improve the quality and consistency of the paediatric imaging pathway.

Methods

A retrospective audit of 48 paediatric elective procedures undertaken between January 2025 and March 2026 was performed, including 25 MRI procedures and 23 gastroenterology procedures. Consent documentation was assessed against Trust consent policy and national guidance using a structured data collection tool. Findings were compared with the previous audit cycle, with particular focus on the MRI consent pathway.

Results

Compliance was high for correct consent form selection (100%), documentation of patient capacity (96%), anaesthetic type (96%) and procedure-related risks (92%).

No cases exceeded the recommended 12-month consent validity period. Areas requiring improvement included documentation of benefits, alternatives and patient concerns (77%), information leaflet provision (49%), and confirmation of consent on the day of procedure (47% where applicable).

Conclusion

This audit identified opportunities to strengthen consent documentation within paediatric imaging pathways. The findings have informed targeted improvement measures, including reinforcement of documentation standards and clinician education, to enhance imaging governance, patient safety and consistency of care.