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Assessing whether MRI's are appropriately requested on the basis of the GP referral letter

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Abstract

Aim - This study looks to analyse whether the process of requesting MRI scans on the basis of GP referral letters is an effective method. A good quality GP referral letter with adequate detail will save money from inappropriate investigations and time in waiting for investigations.

Method - This is a prospective study of forty-four patients. GP referral letters were analysed, patients meeting the Royal College of Radiologists guidelines were sent for MRI before the consultation. The patients were then reviewed in clinic and those who could have been managed without MRI, and those who would require MRI for further management were established.

Results - Thirty patients had MRI scans on the basis of the GP referral letter, 83.3% of these were appropriate after consultation. Twelve patients who were established as needing an MRI scan were not initially sent for MRI, but on review it was decided a scan was needed for further management.

Conclusion - On the whole GP referral letters contain an adequate amount of detail and are accurate. However on some occasions patient treatment is being delayed due to a MRI scan not being requested. The number of patients whose treatment is delayed may be reduced by a check box type form, to be filled in by the GP. Making MRI's available to general practitioners by direct access may also improve the procedure.

Biography

Sohail Nisar completed my MBBS degree from Newcastle University in 2012. I intercalated in 2011 and completed an MRes, my research project was entitled 'Osteosarcoma cell culture on collagen surfaces and in hypoxia alters MMP expression'. He currently a house officer at Braford Royal Infirmary, England.