Junior doctors and senior nurses can triage the patients in AMU efficiently to maintain flow of patients through AMU

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Background

This audit was conducted to determine how reliably and effectively patients admitted to an acute medical unit (AMU), were triaged to medical specialties by admitting doctors and senior nurses in comparison to the admitting consultant hence right patient for right bed as suggested by RCP Acute medicine toolkit 6. The patients accepted on medical take are admitted to AMU who are seen and triaged to medical specialties by AMU consultants. Patients admitted during the evening and night need to wait for the AMU consultant round before they are triaged. Also, patients will stay in AMU until a bed is available in the concerned specialty ward which engages more beds in AMU. All new patients are also seen by a consultant every morning in the specialty wards.

Data Analysis and Results

287 patients; 53 men 234 women 65% above 60 years old (range 18 to 103 years). Consultant triage categories (cat) were 26% cat 1, 22% cat 2, 3% cat 3, 44% cat 4 and 5% others. Junior doctors and senior nurses’ categories matched the consultant’s assessment in 56% and 65%, did not match in 34% and 30%, unrecorded in 10% and 5% of patients respectively. Overall patient’s triage 44% AMU, 13% cardiology, 13% elderly care, 10% gastro, 6% endocrinology, 4% pulmonology, 4% oncology, 1% renal, 1% neurology, <1% rheumatology and 4% to day unit. AMU junior doctor's diagnosis matched consultant diagnosis in 76.3%, did not match in 9.7%, no diagnosis made 11.6% and incomplete data in 3% of patients. Diagnosis of A&E doctors matched consultant diagnosis in 76.1% of patients.

Method

Data was collected prospectively from acute admissions to Acute Medical Unit.

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Conclusion & recommendations

The majority of diagnoses and categorisations made by doctors above FY2/ST1/2 grade and senior nurses were concordant with the consultant hence most of these patients could have been moved to specialty wards after discussing with doctors and senior nurses on duty. All new admissions receive consultant review whether on AMU or specialty ward.