Developing an ambulatory pathway for Iron Deficiency Anaemia

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Aim

Anaemia is a common reason for referral to Acute Medical Units from the community and the Emergency department. The British Society of Gastroenterology has guidelines for the investigation of iron deficiency anaemia. In addition, NICE guidelines for blood transfusion give clear recommendations for the transfusion of blood products.

Our aim was to identify adherence to these guidelines and to design and implement an ambulatory emergency care pathway to standardise management and rationalise transfusion practices.

Method

We conducted a retrospective case note review of 100 case notes over a 3-month period (April-June 2016) with the diagnosis of ‘anaemia’ via our coding department.

Data was collecting using a pre-designed proforma and analysed using Microsoft Access.

Using PDSA quality improvement methodology, an ambulatory emergency care IDA pathway was designed and initiated in our AMU after approval from the Drug & Therapeutics group.

Outcome/Results

In total 63 patients were confirmed as having microcytic anaemia and 35 were recorded as IDA in the notes.

The data across demonstrates demographics, symptoms, investigations, yield, iron therapy, blood transfusion, LOS as well as follow up planning for the patients in the microcytic anaemia category.

Conclusion

Our study demonstrates variation in investigation and referral practices, over-transfusion, and under-utilisation of iron therapy. If the new pathway had been followed we would have seen an enhancement in standardisation of investigation and referral, utilisation of evidence based treatment including a reduction in blood transfusion whilst accessing appropriate alternative iron therapy; as well as increased utilisation of AEC and appropriate follow up.

A validity study is currently underway.

References: