Are we utilising ambulatory care unit effectively? Quality Improvement Project in a District General Hospital

**Background**
- Ambulatory care units aim to provide same day, emergency care for patients without the need of an admission. They aim to improve patient flow and in essence reducing the cost associated with an acute admission (ACT Academy, 2016).
- The Royal College of Physicians Acute care toolkit 10 recommends the use of AMB score to help determine whether a patient is suitable for ambulatory services.
- The AMB score is a quick tool which can be calculated without a formal review of the patient (Acute Care Toolkit, 2015).
- Currently at Whipps Cross University Hospital there is no formal referral system.

**Aims**
1. Improve a patient’s journey for medical care with identifying appropriateness of referrals
2. Reducing the number of admissions < 12 hours
3. Identifying patients that are suitable for ambulatory care

**Guidelines**
- AMB score was used as per guidance from the Royal College of Physicians Acute toolkit 10.

**Method**
- All medical referrals are documented on the online system of “medical acute take list”.
- All outcomes of the patients are documented on this including whether the patient is discharged by the admitting doctor (without post-take) and if they are discharged by the post-take consultant.

**Review Period**
- All patients were reviewed from April 1st 2018 until 30th April 2018. Patients that were discharged by the admitting doctor or the post-take consultant were analysed by calculating their AMB score.
- An AMB score of ≥ 5 were seen to be suitable for ambulatory care and < 5 were not and would need discussion with medical team before referral.

**Fishbourne Diagram**
- Time pressures in A&E
- Lack of immediate investigations available in community
- Lack of knowledge of ambulatory care unit
- Increased admissions to medical team which result in < 12 hours admission

**Graph 1** – Admission and discharges in April 2018 from medical referral

**Graph 2** – Pie chart of patients who were suitable for ambulatory care based on AMB score
- 108 of these patients were deemed to be suitable for ambulatory care based on their AMB score (Graph 2)
- The discharged patient’s AMB scores were calculated (Graph 3)

**Discussion**
- Patients are being discharged in less than 12 hours of being admitted to hospital who may be more suitable for ambulatory care unit.
- It was established there was no referral form for ambulatory care unit which may help improve the utilisation of its services appropriately.
- This has been put in place to try and improve utilisation of ambulatory services.

**Action Plan**
1. Implementation of a new referral form
2. Informing all involved in the referral process including A&E streamers of ambulatory care
3. Presenting the results locally to improve use of ambulatory care

**References**
3. Alia L, Mack J, Shaw R, Gasson A. The Amb Score: A Pilot study to develop a scoring system to identify which emergency medical referrals would be suitable for Ambulatory care management. Acute Medicine 2010; 9: 139