INTRODUCTION – the MSSU and MSSU score

- A MSSU is a ward for patients whose estimated duration of hospital admission (length of stay, LOS) is ≤72 hours/3 days1.
- Patients whose predicted LOS is >3 days should ideally be cared for on a longer-stay general or specialty medical ward.
- Predicting patients’ LOS, and therefore identifying patients suitable for MSSU care, happens shortly after admission and is notoriously difficult.
- The MSSU score2 (Powder et al, Figure 1) has been proposed as a means of helping determine which acute medical patients are most likely to have an admission of ≤3 days and thus be suitable for MSSU admission.

AIMS & METHODS

We aimed to:

- Evaluate the functioning of our MSSU, by investigating the characterisitics of patients admitted and retrospectively assessing the suitability of these patients for MSSU admission according to i) their total LOS, and ii) their retrospective MSSU score.
- Validate the usefulness and accuracy of the MSSU score in predicting a LOS ≤3 days (by comparing LOS between score-appropriate and score-inappropriate patients).
- Introduce the MSSU score to our hospital for a trial period to guide MSSU admissions, with subsequent re-audit of patients admitted during this time to assess the impact on MSSU function and patient flow.

METHODS:

- We retrospectively collected a range of data, including LOS and information to calculate MSSU score, on 100 patients admitted to our MSSU in November 2017 from electronic hospital records.
- For each patient, it was determined whether they were an appropriate MSSU admission based on: i) Their duration of admission (appropriate = LOS ≤72hrs), and; ii) Their retrospective MSSU score (where 0 or 1 = appropriate)
- The scoring system was then introduced for a seven day trial period in April 2018 to guide admissions to MSSU, with subsequent data analysis to see the score’s effects on patients passing through the unit.

RESULTS

PART 1: Nov 2017 – Pre-score introduction (n = 100 patients)

Of the 100 patients admitted to MSSU in the initial period, only 35% of patients had a total hospital LOS ≤3 days, with 62% of patients ‘score-appropriate’

PART 2: Apr 2018 – Post-score introduction (n = 26 patients)

Of the 26 patients admitted to MSSU in the trial period, only 27% of patients had a total hospital LOS ≤3 days, with 50% of patients ‘score-appropriate’

CONCLUSIONS & TAKE-HOME MESSAGES

- Our MSSU is not functioning as its name would suggest – anaecdotally, in our hospital, ‘short-stay patients’ are increasingly managed in non-traditional inpatient areas (e.g. endoscopy unit, day case units, theatre recovery, etc.).
- Despite efforts to trial a score-based admission policy, an unslected cohort of patients continued to be admitted – all levels of staff need to be involved and on board if the score is to be properly re-trialed in the future.
- It is remains extremely difficult to accurately predict LOS, even with a scoring system which brings some benefit.

REFERENCES

1. Royal College of Physicians. Acute medical care. The right person, in the right setting – the score appears to have performed
2. The MSSU score
3. Patients whose predicted LOS is >3 days should ideally be cared for on a longer-stay general or specialty medical ward.
4. Predicting patients’ LOS, and therefore identifying patients suitable for MSSU care, happens shortly after admission and is notoriously difficult.
5. The MSSU score has been proposed as a means of helping determine which acute medical patients are most likely to have an admission of ≤3 days and thus be suitable for MSSU admission.
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