Improving the uptake of HIV testing for clinical indicator conditions in the Acute Medical Assessment Unit in Cork University Hospital

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The number of new HIV diagnoses in Ireland increased by 30% in 2014 (HSPC, 2016) and continues to increase. 45% of new HIV diagnoses are late (CD4 count <350 cells/mm³) presenting with related complications. In CUH, 30% of new HIV diagnoses had a CD4 count <250 cells/mm³ at presentation indicating significant immunocompromise. Earlier diagnosis of HIV infection improves patient outcome and reduces spread of disease through reduced viral load and safer patterns of behaviour.

In areas of high prevalence of HIV (≥ 2 cases/1000 population), screening of all patients presenting to hospital is. NICE guidelines recommend HIV testing for all individuals presenting with specific indicator conditions.

The aim of this project was to audit current practice and improve appropriate HIV testing based on clinical indicator conditions in the Acute Medical Assessment Unit in CUH.

A retrospective chart review was undertaken in the AMAU in CUH from 1st August – 1st September 2017 looking at HIV testing in patients with indicator conditions. 206 patient charts were reviewed.

The triage nurse perform the test after a verbal consent from the patient.

The virology lab was alert about this new development by the Infectious diseases consultant in the team.

All HIV positive patients will referred to the HIV clinic for follow up.

We will re-evaluate the new development in 1 year time.

The improvement

1/ A target educational intervention.

2/ HIV test added to the order-set for blood tests, it is now offered to all individual presented with to the AMU with:
   ✓ Pneumonia that requires hospital admission
   ✓ Weight loss
   ✓ Acute neurological symptoms/parathesia
   ✓ Diarrheal illness
   ✓ Abnormal liver function test/Jaundice
   ✓ Persistent lymphopenia/neutropenia/thromocytopenia
   ✓ Isolated lymphadenopathy
   ✓ Newly diagnosed Lung Cancer and Hodgkin’s lymphoma

3/ There are posters in the AMU triage station indicating that patients may offer HIV testing.