Investigating associations between Frailty, Therapy Complexity and therapy time on an Acute Frailty Unit

Miriam Hope
Specialist Therapy Assessment Team (STAT)

Background
The Specialist Therapy Assessment Team work within the Emergency Department to facilitate rapid discharges and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions. The therapists perceived an increased complexity and time required to manage patients seen on the Acute Frailty Unit (AFU) at St Thomas’ Hospital.

No existing objective tool was identified via literature review as appropriate to assess this in our population, therefore a local therapy complexity scale (TCS) was developed based on existing tools, therapy needs and therapists’ perceived elements of complexity.

The tool was tested for inter-rater reliability and, in a snapshot data set of 20 patients from April 2015 and April 2016, demonstrated an increased median score for complexity and increased mean therapy time.

Aim
This project aimed to investigate associations between Frailty, Therapy Complexity and time spent to complete therapy intervention on an AFU.

Method
Clinical Frailty Scale (CFS), TCS and total therapy time were collected for all patients seen in the AFU over a 4 month period. Data were analysed for associations using SPSS.

Results
Complete data were collected for 312 patients, mean age 84 years (range 56 – 103), 54% female. Statistical analysis using Spearman’s correlation coefficient demonstrated a significant positive association between CFS and TCS ($r_s$ = .319, $p=0.01$), TCS and time ($r_s$ = .409, $p=0.01$), and CFS and time ($r_s$ = .185, $p=0.01$).

Conclusions
There is a positive association between the previously established CFS and our TCS and, with an increase in either, therapy time required to effectively manage these patients and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions also increases. There is a stronger positive association between TCS and time than CFS and time. The developed TCS is a more useful tool to describe, monitor and manage the caseload of patients seen in our AFU than solely CFS, and may also be useful in other therapy settings.

Acknowledgements: many thanks to the Guys and St Thomas’ Charity for sponsoring this poster to be presented at the SAM conference 2018.

Contact details: miriam.hope@gstt.nhs.uk

References

Figure 1. Therapy Complexity Scale

Figure 2. Association between Frailty and Therapy Complexity

Figure 3. Association between Frailty and Therapy Time

Figure 4. Association between Therapy Complexity and Therapy Time