



Improving Adherence to Standards of Care for Young People Presenting with Mental Health Issues to Acute Paediatric Services

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Background:

The COVID-19 pandemic has been linked with a deterioration of mental health in many young people and increasing presentations to acute paediatrics. We measured our department's adherence to local standards of care for mental health, using teaching sessions as a tool for improvement.

Methods:

We collected data for 40 patients presenting to A+E with primary complaint of a mental health issue. We recorded whether a capacity assessment or assessment of immediate emotional needs were completed, and whether the young person was spoken to alone. We presented two educational sessions to the paediatric team and introduced educational posters in the A+E department. We also helped to create a drop-down question for consent on our patient electronic history template before re-auditing a month later.

Results:

The educational sessions were well received with positive feedback from staff. Assessment of capacity and consent improved from 5% to 32% of patients. Assessment of emotional needs improved from 43% to 58%. 79% of patients in the re-audit were spoken to alone, compared to 58% in the original audit.

Analysis:

Teaching sessions and providing practical advice as well as preformed templates improved the rate of adherence to local standards of care at presentation. Further improvements could be made with ongoing, simulation-based teaching.