



Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – KPI 9 (Recorded follow-up 12-16 weeks post index fracture)

*Between 2017 and 2018, Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust saw a significant improvement in their recorded follow-up of patients; from **27%** to **89%**. This case study outlines the pathway to their achievement.*

Problem area

Successfully contacting patients due for their 12-16-week post-fracture follow-up can be a hit and miss process for many services. This was certainly the case for Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust whereby staff were only able to make contact with 50% of eligible patients.

Solution

Upon attending an FLS conference in Bath in February 2018, it was suggested that making appointments for the follow-up calls may help avoid the high volume of non-contactable patients.


Process

The trust implemented a process by which follow-up call appointments are arranged in advance. Patients receive an appointment letter with their time slot as well an information leaflet produced by the Royal Osteoporosis Society; *An Introduction to Osteoporosis*. This acts as a reminder of what osteoporosis is, the consequences, the treatments offered and the support available for patients, their families and carers. In order that each telephone appointment runs smoothly, the trust have ensured that preparatory measures are implemented. For example, they now use a system by which each previously captured fracture is selected in a monthly batch method, which in addition to DXA results and full fracture history, provides sufficient background information for the follow-up call. They have even gone above and beyond audit requirements for the FLS-DB by incorporating NHFD follow-up questions in the calls for hip fracture patients. Although this does add to the workload in that all fracture patients are followed up, regardless of whether they are on treatment, it is massively helpful for orthopaedic colleagues and can be easily coordinated to match the timelines for the FLS-DB and the NHFD.

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Each follow-up call is summarised and sent to the GP, enabling DCH to highlight any medication problems, falls risks and urgent CRT requirements. Regular CRT referrals are made on behalf of patients who have successfully started their hip fracture rehabilitation programme but have since suffered setbacks and are once again struggling with mobility.

Challenges

Arranging follow-up appointments has added an extra step to the original FLS pathway and has proved to be a time-consuming process but staff at Dorset County Hospital foundation Trust are working towards effective prioritisation of the tasks essential to meet all of the FLS-DB targets.

Key players

A special mention is given to Fracture Prevention Assistant, Nicola Shaw, who has given an inordinate amount of her time to ensuring that telephone appointments run to schedule whilst at the same time giving patients the opportunity to change appointments to suit their needs.

Benefits

Setting up follow-up appointments has brought about multiple benefits. Not only has it worked to protect precious staff time by ensuring that calls are planned to suit a patient's convenience thereby ensuring successful contact first time, but it has created an opportunity to provide patients with further education, support and advice.

In particular, the calls provide an opportunity for staff to address medication concerns for patients who are in two minds about taking a bisphosphonate and can provide reassurance for the commencing of treatments.

Results

The success rate of contacting patients first time has been incredible, and in cases where patients make contact to rearrange their appointment, the trust are usually able to conduct the telephone interview immediately.

Overall, patients are grateful for the contact and appreciate the ongoing support, especially with regards to chasing referrals as patients are often still not as mobile as they would like.

New objectives

Their successful improvement in follow-up at 12-16 weeks has prompted the trust to expand the process to cover 12 month follow up calls and they hope to see similar improvements within the next round of audit results.