

Assessment of the Standard of Referrals for Extraction of Carious Primary Teeth under General Anaesthetic

Authors : Emma Carr, Jennifer Morrison, Peter Walker

Abstract : Background: Due to COVID-19, there was a significant reduction in the number of children being treated under general anaesthetic (GA) within the health board, which led to a backlog of referrals. The referrals were being triaged and added to a waiting list in order of priority -determined by the information given. By implementing a checklist, it is anticipated that at least 70% of referrals will have the majority of the information required to effectively prioritise patients. The gold standard, as defined in 'Guidelines For The Management Of Children Referred For Dental Extractions Under General Anaesthesia', indicates that all referrals should mention: (i) Inability of the child to cooperate, (ii) Previously tried anxiety management techniques, (iii) Existence of psychological disorders, (iv) Presence of acute dental infection, (v) Requirement for extractions in multiple quadrants. Method: 130 referrals were examined over three months and compared to the recommended standard. A letter was emailed to referring dentists within Ayrshire & Arran outlining the recommended information to be included within the referral. The second round of data collection was then carried out, which involved an examination of 105 referrals. Results: The first round revealed that only 28% of referrals mentioned at least four defined standards outlined above. Following issuing a checklist to all dentists, this increased to 72%. Conclusion: As many of the children referred for extractions under GA have suffered pain and infection because of dental caries, it is important that delay of treatment is minimised, where possible. The implementation of a standardised checklist has enabled more effective prioritisation of patients.

Keywords : caries, dentistry, general anaesthetic, paediatrics

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