

## **Implementation of Learning Disability Annual Review Clinics to Ensure Good Patient Care, Safety, and Equality in Covid-19: A Two Pass Audit in General Practice**

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**Abstract :** Patients with learning disabilities (LD) are at increased risk of physical and mental illness due to health inequality. To address this, NICE recommends that people from the age of 14 with a learning disability should have an annual LD health check. This consultation should include a holistic review of the patient's physical, mental and social health needs with a view of creating an action plan to support the patient's care. The expected standard set by the Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) is that each general practice should review at least 75% of their LD patients annually. During COVID-19, there have been barriers to primary care, including health anxiety, the shift to online general practice and the increase in GP workloads. A surgery in North London wanted to assess whether they were falling short of the expected standard for LD patient annual reviews in order to optimize care post Covid-19. A baseline audit was completed to assess how many LD patients were receiving their annual reviews over the period of 29th September 2020 to 29th September 2021. This information was accessed using EMIS Web Health Care System (EMIS). Patients included were aged 14 and over as per QOF standards. Doctors were not notified of this audit taking place. Following the results of this audit, the creation of learning disability clinics was recommended. These clinics were recommended to be on the ground floor and should be a dedicated time for LD reviews. A re-audit was performed via the same process 6 months later in March 2022. At the time of the baseline audit, there were 71 patients aged 14 and over that were on the LD register. 54% of these LD patients were found to have documentation of an annual LD review within the last 12 months. None of the LD patients between the ages of 14-18 years old had received their annual review. The results were discussed with the practice, and dedicated clinics were set up to review their LD patients. A second pass of the audit was completed 6 months later. This showed an improvement, with 84% of the LD patients registered at the surgery now having a documented annual review within the last 12 months. 78% of the patients between the ages of 14-18 years old had now been reviewed. The baseline audit revealed that the practice was not meeting the expected standard for LD patient's annual health checks as outlined by QOF, with the most neglected patients being between the ages of 14-18. Identification and awareness of this vulnerable cohort is important to ensure measures can be put into place to support their physical, mental and social wellbeing. Other practices could consider an audit of their annual LD health checks to make sure they are practicing within QOF standards, and if there is a shortfall, they could consider implementing similar actions as used here; dedicated clinics for LD patient reviews.

**Keywords :** COVID-19, learning disability, learning disability health review, quality and outcomes framework

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