ENT REFERRALS FROM PRIMARY CARE - WHAT COULD BE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

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INTRODUCTION

The number of ENT referrals in Primary Care is gradually increasing, putting even more pressure on already overbooked outpatient clinics. Improving quality and reducing the number of unnecessary referrals could dramatically help to reduce outpatient attendance rates, which would be invaluable in the current financial NHS climate.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was to review ENT referrals in primary care, identify emerging patterns of common mistakes, as well as recommend what could be managed differently in primary care.

METHODS

Retrospective review of all ENT referrals in large GP Practice over period of 12 months.

RESULTS

158 referrals in the final study sample.

CONCLUSION

During this study, we identified areas for improvement. In particular we found that the majority of sore throat referrals could have been avoided if a trial of PPI/Gaviscon Advance was done in Primary Care. We have organised teaching sessions for GPs and currently working on developing a referral guidance leaflet which will be available on the Surgery's intranet. If proves useful could be distributed on large scale. Improving ENT education at Primary Care level and increasing the awareness of common pitfalls could have a big impact on reducing the number of unnecessary outpatient referrals.