The ENT emergency clinic: a prospective audit to improve the efficacy of service delivery

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Background

- ENT emergency, casualty or open access clinic is a concept that has been present for more than a decade¹
- Enables acute conditions to be seen quickly, within an optimum environment containing the appropriate clinical and staff resources.
- Benefits patients as well as medical and nursing staff.¹⁻³ However, there is currently no 'gold standard' for the design of an ENT emergency clinic service, and wide variability exists between trusts.⁴

Aims

- Identify an improved model of service by initially appraising the existing service
- Assess whether the introduction of a formal referral pathway will improve the appropriateness of referrals and hence patient waiting times

Methods

Survey designed to appraise existing service

Completed for every patient seen by clinic SHO from 9th -20th October 2017

Data collection involved recording referral source, waiting times, variety and appropriateness of conditions and consultation outcome

Results

- The sample consisted of 72 patients; 41 males (57%) and 31 females (43%)
- Mean age of 42 years
- 8-10 patients were seen per day
- Mean waiting time of 24 minutes (ranging from 0-150)
- 35% of patients required senior review

Figure 2 – Cases referred to the emergency clinic

Figure 4 - Outcome following review

6 inappropriate referrals seen:

- 3 cases of Otitis Externa
- 2 cases of wax removal
- 1 case of post-op seroma after Sistrunk's procedure

Figure 1 – Referral source

Figure 3 – Percentage of patients referred by GP started on treatment in primary care

Discussion

- High level of compliance with referral guidelines
- Up to 10 patients booked for clinic per day excluding patients overbooked on the day. ENT UK recommendations advise a maximum of 6 for Core Trainees and GP trainee ST 1 and 2.⁵
- Low level of initiation of treatment evident in primary care. Treatment guidelines for common ENT conditions and emergency clinic criteria to be circulated with re-audit