

CLAHRCBITE

Brokering Innovation Through Evidence

TITLE: Care After Presenting with Seizures (CAPS)



Seizures are a common reason for attending emergency departments. The Care After Presenting with Seizures (CAPS) project aims to find out if, utilising a seizure care pathway, we could help patients attend an early outpatients appointment (within 2 weeks), reduce readmissions and re-attendances and improve quality of life. It aims to reduce gaps in health inequalities by addressing a problem affecting those from various socioeconomic backgrounds, and trying to improve access to services, based on what patients need.

Background

Epilepsy is one of the most common neurological conditions to present to the emergency department. It is important that these patients receive optimal management in the Emergency Department (ED) but also a rapid access follow-up in specialist services on discharge in order to make changes that could reduce readmissions, re-attendances and improve quality of life. Socio-economic circumstances are associated with a higher risk of seizures, and can be barriers to accessing specialist care that will not only reduce unnecessary ED attendances but also improve patient quality of life and other health outcomes.

Who was involved?

Service users were involved in the project management team for the CAPS project and played an active part in the research itself. There was also support from local and national charities. Some participants were selected for qualitative interviews based on age, gender, sociodemographic background and educational attainment to explore a wide range of backgrounds, with 48% of participants in the highest 20% of social deprivation.

What did we do?

In Cheshire and Mersey a seizure care pathway has been developed in collaboration with a specialist neurology hospital; The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust, and the local strategic clinical network. The care pathway was designed to support clinical management of seizure patients on initial presentation to the ED, as well as rapid access to follow-up services on discharge, with an aim to improve patient outcomes and experience. As well as measuring patient outcomes through surveys and questionnaires, we also interviewed patients about their experience of the intervention. We asked questions such as;

- How was your experience of the seizure care you received when you went to the emergency department?
- Was your experience any different to previous experiences when you have had a seizure?
- Are there any ways that you think the service could be improved?

What we found and what does this mean?

The project has highlighted the importance of communication and continuity of care across service providers. Patients told us that they felt 'abandoned' by the service once discharged from ED, that they didn't know who to turn to for help or reassurance, and that communication across the services was poor. They suggested that we could;

- Improve lines of communication between appointments to improve reassurance
- Communicate better with the GP so that they had someone to turn to for support between appointments
- Improve discharge support information so that patients know what to expect to happen next with regards to their ongoing care. There is evidently scope for improvement of the seizure care pathway as it stands which will ultimately improve patient experience and outcomes.

What next?

- At a local level, we need to bring these findings to the attention of local NHS managers, CCGs, and clinicians to highlight key areas of improvement in care.
- Work collaborating with IT and digital health technologies may prove useful in the future to improve the communication across trusts and to patients to improve their experience.
- These findings, along with other equally important findings from the study, will be presented at key conferences and within research publications for further sharing across the UK and globally.

What is NIHR CLAHRC NWC?

The mission of the NIHR CLAHRC NWC is to work collaboratively with Partner organisations and other stakeholders including members of the public to co-produce and conduct high-quality, leadership enhancing, applied research designed to decrease health inequalities and improve the health of the population of the North West Coast.

Find out more

<http://www.clahrc-nwc.nihr.ac.uk/index.php>

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