

POSTER PRESENTATION

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Nurse-led telephone referral to paediatric emergency and assessment units

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Background

An increasing number of acute referrals have led to unsatisfactory working conditions and a degradation of the service to the families and their children attending paediatric emergency and assessment units (PEAU). The usual way of referring for the general practitioner (GP) was by telephone to the resident. This study investigated if a nurse-led telephone referral system would optimize conditions for patients and staff.

Methods

The project period was from October to December 2009. A team of five paediatric nurses were in charge of the nurse-led referral system with backup from the attending physician. Prior to the project the nurses were introduced to a flowchart on documentation of the referrals and a guideline to obtain essential information about the child's condition. The guideline also included a model to ensure efficient and accurate reception and transmission of information - the ISBAR communication model. The project was evaluated using an electronic questionnaire and focus group interviews.

Aim

- * To create optimal continuity of care
- * Optimise service to GPs and other collaborators
- * Improve quality of care to the families
- * To improve working conditions in the PEAU

Results

Nurse-led telephone referral ensured:

- * Optimal continuity of care as the nurses in charge of referral had a better overview

- * Improved working procedures as information about the children were already documented prior to arrival to the PEAU

- * Better working environment as staff was able to examine the children and talk to the families without interruptions

- * An improved quality of the referral system according to the GPs

Conclusion

A nurse-led referral system to a PEAU has proven successful and staff reported improved working conditions. Furthermore did the project shed a light on the importance of a validated triage tool to prioritize acutely admitted children. As a result of this has the PEAU commenced a project in order to develop a paediatric triage tool.

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