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E-referrals to ENT: How have these changed our practice and how can we be nice?

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Background: In 2014, Oosthuizen audited ENT referrals to a Dublin hospital against the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) referral template and found that they only included on average 16/37 recommended details. They suggested that standardized referral forms may provide superior information.

Aim & Methods: Five years later, in Benfield Park Medical Group, Newcastle upon Tyne, and all referrals to secondary care are electronic and most are standardized. We audited 183 referrals to ENT against the same ICGP guidelines to investigate if the addition of e-referrals has improved compliance. We also investigated if e-referrals were in line with current UK guidelines and how this affected definitive surgical management from ENT.

Results & Conclusions: Our data shows that e-referrals have dramatically improved the quality of referrals from 16/37 to 26/37 details. We also found referrals in line with UK guidelines were more likely result in an ENT procedure and may be more likely to require an operation. Interestingly there are still patients being operated on whom does not fit into a nice criterion and GPs must continue to be allowed the flexibility to refer these patients if they see fit.

Recent Publications

1. Oosthuizen J, Mc Shane D, Kinsella J and Conlon B (2015) General practitioner ENT referral audit. Irish Journal of Medical Science 184(1):143-146.

Biography

Grant S Nolan is a junior surgeon from United Kingdom. His research Interest is Plastics and ENT Surgery.

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