Audit Of Telephone Nursing Advice

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Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research
CST Conference Oct. 5-7, 2003
Goals of Telephone Triage

- Reduce unnecessary demand on existing health care resources by advising the caller on the most appropriate level of care for their current health concern
- Promote patient independence and self-confidence in their decision making
- Provide a standardized source for health information & availability of health services
The Teletriage Service

- 24 / 7
- Bilingual service
- Northern Ontario (pilot - 22 months)
- Trained registered nurses
- Clinical guidelines
- Health information topics
- Advise on the most appropriate level of care
Methods - 1

- Audit checklist developed by CRaNHR
  - Assess
    - nurse-caller interaction
    - use and usefulness of the clinical software
    - appropriateness of advice
  - Pilot-tested by 2 FPs and 2 NPs
Methods - 2

- 73 taped calls (selected from ~350)
  - Complete call was recorded (n=~300)
  - Caller consent (n=101)
  - Nurse consent (n=73)

- Each call was audited by 1 FP, 1 NP and 1 RN
  (Note: RNs with teletriage experience)

- 73 calls x 3 auditors/call = 219 audits

- Each auditor assessed 28-44 calls
Callers and Patients (audited calls)

All Callers
- 89% female
- Age ??

All Patients
- 67% female
- Median age 11y

Caller = Patient
- 86% female
- Median age 30y
Type of Calls

- 41 clinical guidelines (used 1-3 times)
  - 15 pediatric guidelines used in 30 calls
    - E.g., Cough/ hoarseness/ strider
  - Guidelines for Trauma & Genitourinary symptoms were used several times
- 14 health information topics used in 14 calls
Teletriage Advice (73 calls)
Appropriateness of Advice (219 audits)

- Unnecessarily overly cautious
- Overly cautious
- Overly cautious but with good reason
- Appropriate
- Insufficient but with good reason
- Insufficient
- Inappropriately overly cautious

October 07, 2003
## Auditor Agreement (n=13-23 calls)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NP1</th>
<th>NP2</th>
<th>RN1</th>
<th>RN2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FP1</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP2</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>79%</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>NP2</td>
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<td>65%</td>
<td>86%</td>
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Nurse-Caller Interaction (219 audits)

- Establish relationship
- Extract information
- Ability to describe problem
- Level of understanding
Nurse-Caller Interaction (219 audits)

- 0%
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%

- more anxious
- slightly more anxious
- no change
- slightly less anxious
- less anxious

Caller - change in anxiety level
Conclusions - 1

- Caveat: non-random sample
- Representative sample
- In over 90% of the 219 audits, the teletriage nurses’ advice was rated as
  - “appropriate” or
  - “insufficient” but with good reason or
  - “overly cautious” but with good reason
Conclusions - 2

- At least 2 of 3 auditors rated the advice as “appropriate” in over 90% of the 73 calls.
- All 73 calls were rated as “appropriate” by at least 1 auditor.
- Where auditors and teletriage nurses disagreed, it was the auditor’s judgment that the teletriage nurse tended to err on the side of caution (3x as likely).
Conclusions - 3

- The nurse-caller interaction was judged to be “good” or better in over 90% of the audits
  - Nurse’s ability to establish a relationship and extract information
  - Caller’s willingness to describe problem and level of understanding
- Caller’s became less anxious in 57% of the audits
Acknowledgements

- The Richard Ivey Foundation
- Auditors
- Clinidata Corporation
- Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences
- Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research
- Laurentian University