

Abstract No 5390971 Urgent Suspected Cancer (USC) Referrals in a District General Hospital:

A Re-Audit of Referrals and Comparison to NICE Guidelines

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Introduction

- NICE criteria for referring urgent suspected cancer (USC) cases was developed to facilitate pathway for patients thought to have a possible malignancy(1).
- Demands on the NHS have subsequently been exacerbated greatly by the Covid-19 pandemic, and waiting lists are at record levels(2).
- Previous audit of the Radiology Department in Glangwili Hospital (GGH) in 2018 showed 157 USC referrals over a month with 31 cases (19.7%) not meeting NICE guidelines.

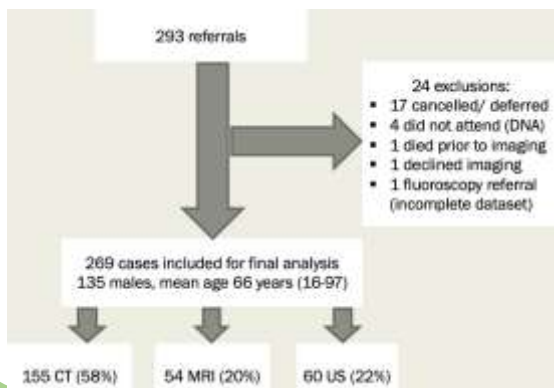
Aim

- Ascertain changes in volume of referrals received and imaging performed in the radiology department
- Assess whether the USC referrals met NICE guidelines
- Assess whether the scans were performed and reported within 14 days of request

Methods

- Data collected prospectively on USC referrals to GGH radiology department from 1/11/2021 to 30/11/2021 inclusive.
- Exclusion criteria shown in **Figure 1**.
- Results evaluated via Welsh clinical portal and Synapse respectively.

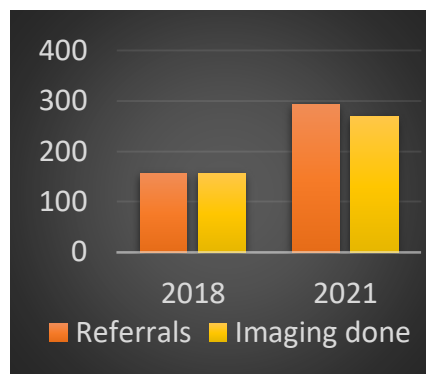
Figure 1: Patient selection process



Results

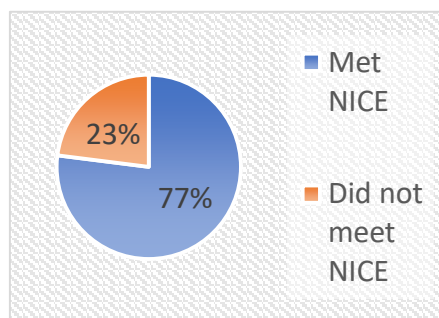
- 293 referrals received, 269 cases met inclusion criteria
- Mean age 66 years (16-97)

Figure 2: Changes in volume of referrals



71% increase in imaging done compared to previous audit

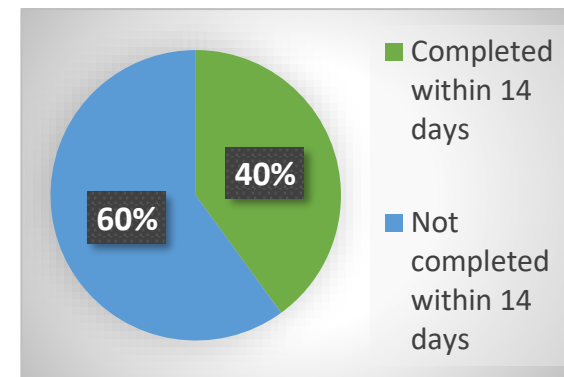
Figure 3: Adherence to NICE guidelines



- 61 requests (23%) of USC referrals did not meet NICE guidelines
- 45 of those cases were staging requests for previously diagnosed malignancy

Figure 4: Adherence to NICE guidelines

107/269 (40%) referrals were imaged and reported within 14 days



Limitations

- Audit conducted in Nov 2021-possible delays over Christmas period may have impacted data
- Post covid-19 workload may not be reflective of normal workload

Conclusions

- Volume of work in Radiology has been increasing(3), and greatly exacerbated by Covid-19 pandemic, with 71% increase USC referrals in our unit compared to 2018
- Almost a quarter of cases (23%) did not meet NICE with the most common indication being staging requests.
- Overall, less than half of the cases are completed within 14 days which may contribute to delays in the diagnosis and management of suspected cancer cases

REFERENCES

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