
THE IMPACT OF A CONSULTATION LIAISON SERVICE UPON URGENT PSYCHIATRIC PRESENTATIONS TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

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Introduction

Before October 2012 there was no service level agreement for psychiatry cover in Whiston Hospital, an acute trust in the UK. The Crisis team would visit on goodwill to assess patients. This changed when a Liaison Psychiatry (LP) service was commissioned to provide 24 hour cover, Monday to Sunday for the Emergency Department (ED) for adults.

Aims

To quantify waiting times to be assessed by psychiatry, comparing the new LP Service (intervention group) to its predecessor (control). The null hypothesis being that the waiting time for the control and intervention group are the same.

Methods

The authors prospectively collected data on all referrals received by the LP service in the first three months of operation n=305 and retrospectively collected data on a random sample of 50 patients referred from ED in the same months 2011 (control).

Results

The median time from referral to the time of psychiatric assessment in the control group was 162.5 minutes [IQR 130-330], the mean time was 246.16 [95% CI 180 to 312]. The median time from referral to the time of psychiatric assessment following the introduction of the LP service was 30 minutes [IQR 15-90], the mean time was 79.63 [95% CI 65 to 93]. When the two samples were compared using an independent *t* test they were significantly different $p < 0.002$.

Conclusions

The new LP service has decreased the median wait for a psychiatry assessment by 132 minutes. The team currently sees 82% of referrals within 60 minutes. This improves patient safety and encourages appropriate and timely discharge.