

DEPENDENCY SCORING IN A HAEMODIALYSIS UNIT

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PROBLEM: The haemodialysis population within our unit is becoming increasingly elderly and more dependent. Current staff patient ratios have not been changed or reviewed to take into account this change in patient demand. A dependency scoring tool would allow us to classify patients according to their needs and then determine the level of staff required on each patient shift.

PURPOSE: To determine the dependency levels of all patients attending for haemodialysis using a validated scoring tool. Subsequently the purpose was to identify how staff skill mix could be utilized in the best way to meet patient demand.

DESIGN: Current practice was evaluated to identify the activities that were undertaken during the patients time in the haemodialysis unit. A score was then ascribed to each of these activities based on time and no of staff of which grade were required to complete them.

FINDINGS: At the time of writing the work is still in progress. We have devised a dependency scoring tool and work is currently underway to validate this. We will be able to present full findings at the conference.

CONCLUSION: The dependency scoring tool will allow us to classify each patient attending for dialysis and then identify the workload for each shift. Once scores have been determined the staff skill mix and staff patient ratios can then be matched to meet patient demand. This will ensure that acutely ill patients or those with co-morbid conditions and multiple symptoms on dialysis will be cared for by trained well experienced staff. Patients who have high dependency scores relating to mobility or other basic nursing tasks will be dialysed at times where the skill mix is conducive to this.

RELEVANCE: This approach to identifying patients needs and matching staff to this is something new within the haemodialysis field. This tool will allow patients needs to be identified and categorized and provide information for planning workload accordingly.