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A Study of the Clinicians Approach to Patients' Driving Status in the Memory Clinic Setting

N. Nichols¹, E. Fairholme¹, M. Thomas¹, M. George¹

¹Old Age Psychiatry, Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Kettering, United Kingdom

Introduction

Memory services constitute a significant part of old age psychiatry. Part of the memory assessment includes discussion of driving status as legally there is a requirement to disclose a dementia diagnosis to the DVLA (Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency). At assessment a driving assessment can be undertaken to establish whether a patient is safe to continue driving.

Objectives

To establish if discussions regarding driving are taking place in memory assessment clinics, and if available guidance regarding dementia diagnosis and driving are followed. To then re-audit the department following dissemination of results from the initial audit.

Methods

Standards set were 100% of patients would have documented discussion of driving. 60 patients were randomly selected from 423 referrals to memory assessment clinic between August 2012 and January 2013. Their electronic records were accessed and audited for evidence regarding documented discussion of driving. The same process was repeated following dissemination of results, with 40 patients records audited between March and May 2014. Data was collected from Bristol Activity of Daily Living Scale (BADLS) and trust pro-forma.

Results

Patients given a diagnosis of mild cognitive impairment were excluded. Of others, 55% of patients in the first audit and 56% of patients in the second audit had documented discussions regarding driving status.

Conclusion

Standards were not met in either audit for a multitude of reasons, including restructuring of services. Recommendations include improvement of information collection tools and further audit, allowing for a longer length of time for implementation of changes.