

A CLINICAL AUDIT EVALUATING COMPLIANCE WITH RECOMMENDED COLPOSCOPY WAIT TIMES IN PATIENTS WITH A 'HIGHER RISK' ABNORMAL CERVICAL SCREEN

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Introduction:

The renewed Australian National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) commenced in December, 2017. The NCSP Quality Framework outlines recommended colposcopy wait times for patients with 'higher risk' abnormal cervical screening tests. Prompt colposcopy is important for the early detection and treatment of cervical cancer and pre-cancerous changes in the cells of the cervix. The objective of this audit was to determine compliance with recommended colposcopy wait times in patients undergoing cervical screening at a sexual health clinic in Perth, WA.

Methods:

Eligible patients with an abnormal cervical screening test requiring colposcopy were included in the audit and time to colposcopy was calculated for each patient. The NCSP standards were operationalised by adopting benchmarks from the Public Health England Cervical Screening Standards.

Results:

A total of 45 patients were included, which represented ~50% of the clinic's annual 'higher risk' cases. They were grouped according to three result types; (i) oncogenic human papillomavirus (HPV) (any type) and high-grade/possible high-grade cytology, (ii) oncogenic HPV (16/18) and negative/low-grade cytology, and (iii) persisting oncogenic HPV infection on a 12-month repeat test. The results from each group were compared to the corresponding NCSP standards. Time to colposcopy exceeded the recommended benchmark in all groups. In total, only 44% of patients had a colposcopy within the recommended timeframe. Mean time to colposcopy for all patients was 10.2±13.8 weeks.

Conclusion:

Colposcopy wait times in a metropolitan sexual health clinic currently exceed the recommendations in the NCSP Quality Framework. This has implications for the timely follow-up of women with cervical abnormalities. This information may be useful for providing patients with expected colposcopy wait times, informing current practice at this clinic, and in the evaluation of the renewed NCSP.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

This audit was conducted as part of a final year MD project. No funding was received and there are no conflicts of interest to declare.