Improving MDT-wide recognition of frailty in general practice

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Study Aim: To assess the baseline rate of frailty documentation and recognition across our general practice MDT, implement educational and systemic interventions to upskill the wider MDT in using the Clinical Frailty Scale (CFS), and re-audit to measure the improvement in proactive frailty coding.

1. Background

Frailty is the dynamic health state in which multiple body systems lose their inherent physiological reserves[2]. As a result, relatively minor stressor events—a mild infection, a medication change, or a minor fall—can trigger disproportionate and severe changes in a patient's health, functional status, or independence[2].

It is important to identify frailty early in primary care to implement strategies to promote longer term safety and health in the community. With a diverse range of MDT members in general practice, it is important that all are equipped to recognise frailty, code this and make a plan with which to manage the effects of this.

2. Study Design

Cycle 1: A retrospective computer-database audit was conducted at Barns Medical Practice to assess the current baseline of frailty-coding and to identify which members of the healthcare team were actively recognising and documenting frailty.

Data Extraction:
Clinical System Used: Vision Primary Care Software.
Time Period: A 12-month retrospective search was executed looking at data from March 2025 to March 2026.
Search Strategy: The clinical system was interrogated using codes relating to "Clinical Frailty Scale score[1]", and "Frailty screening."

Inclusion & Exclusion Criteria
Inclusion: Any patient registered at the practice who had a new or updated frailty-related code entered onto their medical record within the specified 12-month window.
Exclusion: Historical frailty codes entered prior to the 12-month audit window.

3. Data was analysed to determine:

- The total volume of practice population actively coded for frailty within the last year.
- The professional designation of the clinician entering the code
- The severity of frailty being captured, utilizing the Clinical Frailty Scale (CFS) metrics[2].

Cycle 2: data was re-audited at 3 months post-intervention to assess for change

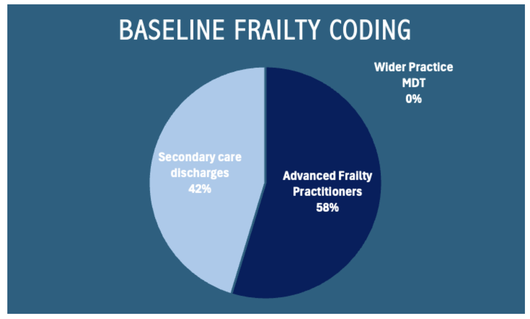

Table 1: Data collected March 2025-26:
-115 patients in total
-Secondary care discharges: 48
-Advanced Frailty Practitioners: 67
-Wider Practice MDT: 0

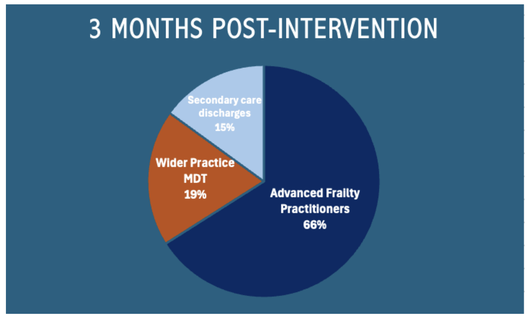

Table 2: Data collected April - June 2026:
-67 patients in total
-Secondary care discharges: 10
-Advanced Frailty Practitioners: 44
-Wider Practice MDT: **13**

KEY INTERVENTIONS: DRIVING CHANGE BETWEEN CYCLES

4. Key Interventions

Practice-wide Teaching Presentation:
- Identification: recognising early 'red flag' frailty indicators
- **Action:** Navigating local, community-based pathways and resources available to support frail patients

Vision Template Integration:
- **Clinical Frailty Scale (CFS)** scoring system was formally embedded into the standardized **Annual Chronic Disease Review Template** which is used by nursing colleagues.

5. Key Findings

✓ **Cycle 1 (Table 1):**
A total of **115 patients** were identified as having been coded for frailty within the 12-month audit window.

✓ **Cycle 2 (Table 2):**
A total of **67** patients were coded as frail between April-June 2026 following audit intervention.

6. Limitations

Although OT referrals were formally recommended for all patients with a new coding of frailty, the scope of this project did not include tracking referral completion rates. Future useful work could track the outcome completion rates following frailty coding.

7. Conclusions & Action Plan

- Integrating frailty coding into Annual review template and delivering MDT-wide teaching has improved frailty recognition and coding in primary care
- This will be re-audited at 6 months post-intervention to establish longer term outcomes
- Ongoing promotion of the utilization of the Clinical Frailty score

NHS Elect (2020) *Clinical Frailty Scale (CFS)* (Version 1.0) [Mobile app]. Available at: https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/clinical-frailty-scale-cfs/id1508556286 (Accessed: 13 September 2026).

References:
1. Clinical Frailty Scale. [Online] Available from: https://www.scfn.org.uk/clinical-frailty-scale [Accessed: 12th September 2026]

2. Abbasi M, Rolfson D, Khera AS, Dabravolskaj J, Dent E, Xia L. Identification and management of frailty in the primary care setting. CMAJ. 2018 Sep 24;190(38):E1134-40. doi: 10.1503/cmaj.171509.