

A Quality Improvement Project Implementing a Dysphagia Screening Tool For Patients Admitted to Hospital With Femoral Fractures

Dr Dolcie Paxton^{1,2}, Marianne Buist^{1,3}, Dr Rachel Bradley^{1,2}

University Hospitals Bristol and Weston, Bristol Royal Infirmary, Bristol, UK¹; Department of Care of The Elderly²; Department of Speech and Language Therapy³

Introduction

Evidence suggests 30-40% of patients with a neck of femur fracture (NOF#) will develop oropharyngeal dysphagia (OPD) during the perioperative period.¹⁻⁵

- Our data shows that our Speech and Language Therapy Team (SLT) identify only 12-15% of OPD in this cohort.
- Given the importance of nutrition, hydration and medication during a patient's recovery, early identification of OPD is critical.

Aims

We aimed to increase the identification of OPD in this subset of patients in the perioperative period by several methods, demonstrated below in our driver diagram.

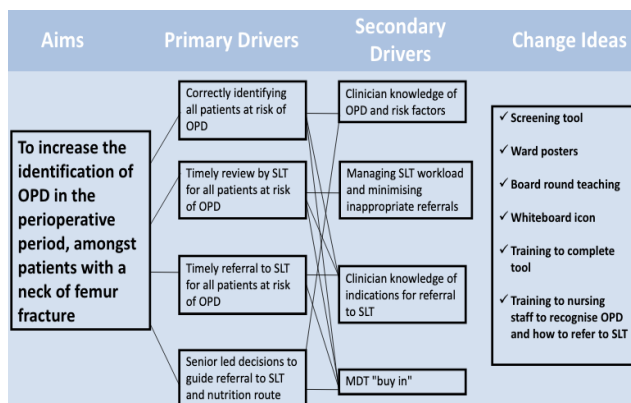


Figure 1: Drive diagram summarising our primary/secondary drivers.

References

NHS
University Hospitals
Bristol and Weston
NHS Foundation Trust

Dysphagia Screen

Methods

- We launched a dysphagia screening tool in November 2023 for all patients admitted with a NOF#.
- A monthly retrospective review of patient notes allowed collection of patient age, frailty score, relevant comorbidities, and compliance and outcome of screening tool, and if referred to SLT whether OPD was present on initial assessment.
- We had several balancing measures including the length of time a patient is kept nil by mouth and the time until SLT review.

Summary of Results

Results were collected from Nov 22– April 23.

58 of 157 patients had a completed screening tool (40% compliance).

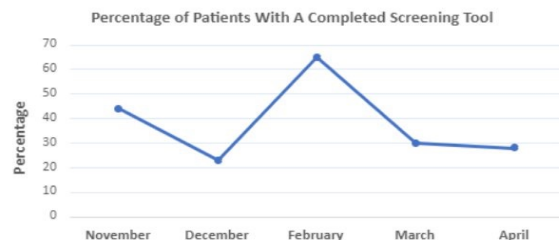


Figure 2: Percentage of patients with a completed screening tool.

Of the 58 patients with a screening tool, we referred 28 to SLT. We identified 19 patients with OPD (33%).

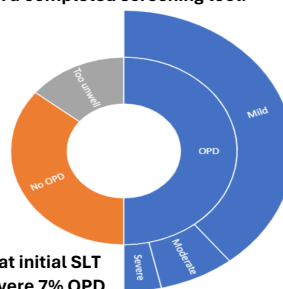


Figure 3: Figure demonstrating outcomes at initial SLT assessment. Mild 79%, Moderate 14%, Severe 7% OPD.

As our PDSA cycles progressed, a greater proportion of patients referred to SLT were found to have OPD. This demonstrates that our adjustment to the tool and staff training improved the rates of OPD identification.

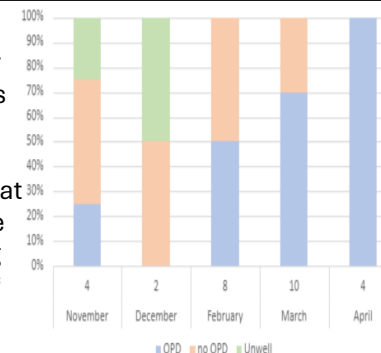


Figure 4 demonstrates the overall number of patients referred to SLT each month and the outcome on initial assessment.

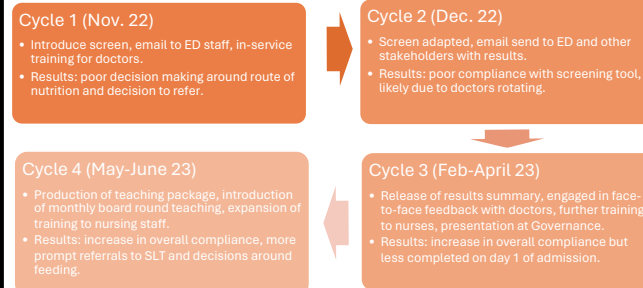


Figure 5: Diagram summarising our four PDSA cycles.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- We have increased the identification of OPD from 12-15% to 33%.
- No patients were kept nil by mouth.
- SLT should be key members of the orthogeriatrics team; 90% of patients assessed in 24 hours.
- Next steps
 - Amend the tool to make it more specific.
 - Improve compliance rates.
 - Include the screening tool into the updated NOF# proforma.
 - Increased training to the MDT.