

“Somewhere Over the Rainbow Investigations” A survey on attitudes toward pre-operative investigations in a university teaching hospital.

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Introduction

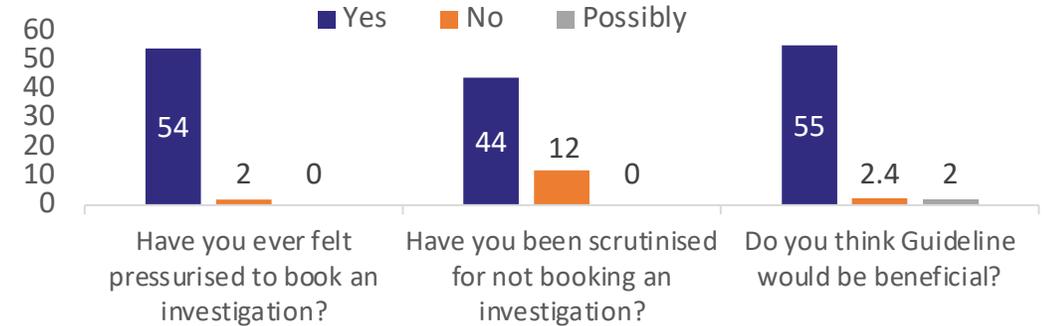
We conducted a review of the current practice of ordering pre-operative investigations in our hospital and discovered a significant amount of non-essential or unnecessary investigations being undertaken. Not only does this incur substantial costs and demand significant resources but it may also cause potential harm to patients.[1] Therefore we assessed the attitudes of the practitioners booking pre-operative investigations compared to the recommendations set by the NICE pre-operative investigation guidelines.[2]

Methods

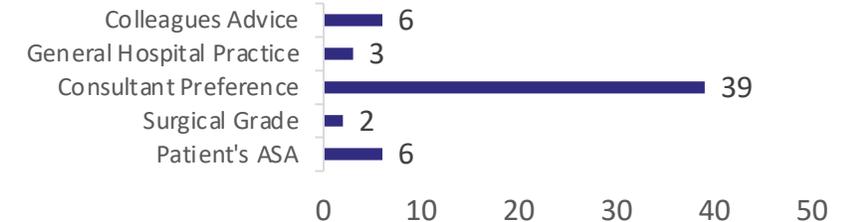
An anonymised questionnaire was distributed out to the intern cohort in a single university teaching hospital examining the driving forces for booking investigations as well as their indications for booking investigations. The intern cohort was selected as they were found to be responsible for booking virtually all inpatient pre-operative investigations. This Questionnaire was distributed on two separate occasions over a six-month period. A total of 56 responses were received.

Results

Of the 56 interns questioned, 75% were not aware of any preoperative investigation guidelines. 96% have felt under pressure to book an investigation and 78% of participants have been scrutinized for not booking an investigation. The main influence for booking investigations was Consultant/Team preference at 69.6%. Over 50% of those questioned would book a complete screen (FBC/UE/COAG/CRP/ECG/CXR) for all patients. There was also a wide variance in reasoning for CXRs and ECHOs, with 16 and 17 different indications recorded for each, respectively. 98.2% of participants felt that the introduction of pre-operative guidelines would be beneficial.



Major Influences on booking Investigations



Discussion

As opposed to focused investigations that enhance our perioperative care, we have instead a blunderbuss, or rainbow, approach to testing. This has led to increased demands on precious resources, increased cost and potentially exposing us to future medico-legal issues.[1] Teaching sessions were held on two occasions to help guide this intern cohort regarding guidelines for booking investigations at the beginning of each rotation. Risks of booking investigations without ensuring proper follow up was also discussed. Currently pre-operative guidelines are being introduced and their effect will be reviewed.

References

1. The Economic Burden of Incidentally Detected Findings, RCNA
2. Routine preoperative tests for elective surgery: summary of updated NICE guidance, BMJ.