

Pre-operative pregnancy testing; An audit of adherence to guidelines at a single institution

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INTRODUCTION

NICE guidelines advise assessment and counselling of all patients of childbearing age for pregnancy prior to induction of anaesthesia¹. Incidence of non-obstetric surgery for pregnant women ranges between 0.3% and 2.2%².

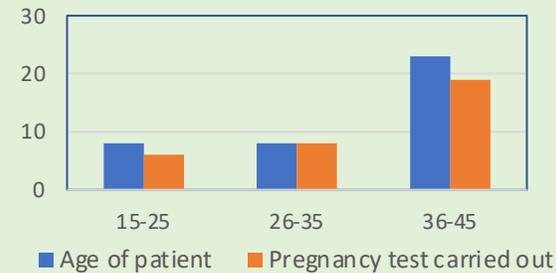
For procedures requiring anaesthesia, women of childbearing age must be made aware of the potential risks, should undergo a urine or blood serum pregnancy test with consent. Our aim in this audit is to assess adherence to these guidelines in Galway University Hospital (GUH).

METHODS

Retrospective analysis of 39 randomly selected surgical cases over a 1-month period. Preoperative data was collected from hospital records. Case included if procedure requiring general anaesthesia and duration of induction to emergence >30 minutes. Patient was considered to be of childbearing age as documented in anaesthetic record or theatre care-plan.

Standard	% Yes	% No
Patient asked screening questions	100	0
Beta-hCG test	82.1%	17.9%

PREGNANCY TESTING AND AGE



RESULTS

n=39. The patient age range varied between 16 and 46. 8 (20.5%) procedures were emergent and 31 (79.4%) elective. 7 (17.9%) cases involved exposure of the patient to ionising radiation intraoperatively. All patients were asked if they could be pregnant, and 32 (82.1%) of those received a pregnancy test. General anaesthetic was used in all cases.

CONCLUSIONS

Adherence to pregnancy testing was found to be in line with recommended guidelines at GUH. While the institution examined in this audit displayed 100% compliance with assessing patients as directed, there was no documentation available on if the patient had been counselled on risks of anaesthesia to pregnancy during their consent. Guidelines will be shared to healthcare staff. A change to the care path form with an area to indicate that potential risks of anaesthesia to surgery have been explained will be proposed as recommended by NICE guidelines.

REFERENCES

1. NICE Clinical Guidelines 3: Preoperative Tests – The use of routine preoperative tests for surgery. NICE, London June 2003 (<http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=56818>).
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3. Arkenbosch JHC, van Ruler O, de Vries AC. Non-obstetric surgery in pregnancy (including bowel surgery and gallbladder surgery). *Best Pract Res Clin Gastroenterol.* 2020;44-45:101669. doi:10.1016/j.bpg.2020.101669