



# The Impact of Electronic Referrals from Salisbury Foundation Trust to Wiltshire NHS Stop Smoking Service

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# Background

Smoking remains largest single cause of health inequalities in the UK

Smokers are 4 times more likely to quit with NHS Stop Smoking Support

Standards for Better Health (DH 2004)

- Raised profile of Public Health Agenda
- Primary & secondary care to work together to tackle health inequalities

‘Teachable moment’ when a patient visits hospital

# Background

Referrals from secondary care are generally low

- 1600 in South West region in 2008-9

Smokers referred by completion of referral form.

Follow up by one of respiratory nursing team

No responsibility for identifying smokers by clinical staff.

Key opportunity often missed

# The Opportunity

Opportunity identified to increase referrals using IT available at the hospital

Premise:

‘Referrals will increase if there is a quick, efficient means of electronic referral’

# The Project

PCT and Hospital set up a working group

Liaised with IT Department

- Patient Information Management System (PIMS)

3 questions asked of patients and recorded:

- Do you smoke?
- Do you want to stop smoking?
- Do you want a referral to your local Stop Smoking Service?

# The Results

Monthly referral data provided by PCT

Pre-implementation referrals:

- Approx 6 referrals per month

February 2008 – implementation across inpatient departments

- 2008 average of 18.5 referrals per month

June 2009 – rolled out to outpatients

- 2009 average 37 referrals per month

# The Results

November 2009 – Emergency Department included

- Referral rate increase to 90-100 referrals per month

DH Systems Based Approach to Stop Smoking Interventions in Secondary Care introduced September 2009

- Pathways and flow charts to enhance and reinforce the programme
- Temporary abstinence pathway

# Challenges

PCT targets around 4 week quit rates

Quit rates from secondary care referrals can be lower

Even if unsuccessful at this attempt, referral has:

- Raised awareness of the free NHS Stop Smoking Service
- Enhanced the 'teachable moment'

# Challenges

IT as yet unable to define referrals by department

Different IT systems used across the hospital

Disease focus of secondary care staff

Lack of staff training around brief interventions

Budgetary constraints

# Summary

Stop Smoking a key Public Health issue  
with implications for cost and efficacy in  
secondary care

Joint working of PCT and Foundation Trust  
essential to success of project

Existing IT used to make electronic referrals

Referrals went from less than 100 a year to  
90-100 a month