In order to speed up the diagnostic pathway, in January 2014 we set up a “straight to CT” service for patients with suspected lung cancer from primary care, where positive scans undergo immediate chest physician review to decide the next diagnostic test and a lung cancer nurse specialist (CNS) offers the patient a telephone assessment to plan this. We have looked at the utility of this “virtual clinic” in the management of our patients with lung cancer over the first 2 years, in particular paying attention to patient uptake and satisfaction, and outcomes.

Of about 300 patients annually who have been triaged in this way, 82% have chosen the virtual clinic, 13% preferred or the CNS advised a outpatient appointment, 4% required immediate inpatient referral, and the remaining 1% were referred back to the GP as outpatient intervention not felt appropriate (too unwell). Overall, 75% subsequently were diagnosed with lung cancer.

For those patients who chose the virtual clinic consultation, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. This has been captured qualitatively at the time and at subsequent events e.g. patients report feeling well informed and supported, and quantitatively by an ongoing survey: 98% prefer the telephone clinic versus clinic appointment, 97% felt prepared for next test.

This study has shown that performing a number of diagnostic investigations using a telephone support is not only feasible but preferred by patients with suspected lung cancer. By avoiding unnecessary clinic attendances it improves patient convenience, speeds up the diagnostic pathway and reduces unnecessary costs. This early CNS assessment and interventions reduces the level/scope of patient concerns prior to the time of diagnosis, which has further significance to the team formalising the Holistic Needs Assessment process.

CNSs are best placed to do the consultations as they have the specialist skills and knowledge of the local clinical pathways, tests, disease symptomology and ultimately provide the continuity throughout the diagnostic pathway through to treatment and we recommend this to other cancer units.

Methods

We surveyed a majority of hospitals (six NHS trusts) in our region about their current follow-up practice. A retrospective study was performed of patients in our trust who underwent curative surgery for NSCLC between March 2013 and December 2014.

Results

None of the surveyed trusts were following ESMO or ACCP guidelines. Only two had a local policy in place. The majority used chest X-ray (CXR) rather than CT follow-up, which reflected our practice.

We identified 79 patients who had undergone surgery with curative intent in our trust. 5 patients were excluded, as notes were unavailable for 2, and 3 died before any follow-up. Amongst the remaining 74 patients, follow-up was for a mean of 19 months. During this time the mean number of CTs and CXRs per patient was 1.3 and 2.7 respectively. Following ESMO guidelines would reduce the number of CT scans compared to our overall current practice, to 1.1 per patient, whilst ACCP guidelines would result in an increase to 2.7 CTs per patient.

Conclusions

Most patients in our region are followed-up by CXR rather than CT. Most hospitals are not using follow-up guidelines, resulting in practice variation. Compared to current practice in our trust, following ESMO guidelines would not result in an increase in CT scans for this purpose, and no CXRs would be required for routine follow-up. Therefore it may be feasible to adopt this more uniform, evidence-based approach.

References


Cystic Fibrosis

Methods

We performed cross validation method.

Results

44 children were identified with CF at a mean age of 22 days. There was no difference in birth weight z scores between

Introduction

Cystic Fibrosis (CF) newborn screening (NBS) was implemented across the UK in 2007. It has been associated with improved clinical outcomes particularly related to nutrition. We reviewed the nutritional progress of infants diagnosed with CF by NBS in the West Midlands. Our aim was to develop a model for predicting height and weight in the first 2 years of life based on information available at the first clinic visit.

Methods

Anthropometric data is recorded at each outpatient visit for children with CF. This data was reviewed in conjunction with the CF NBS data for all children diagnosed with CF in the West Midlands between November 2007 and October 2014. Cluster analysis, classification and polynomial regression modelling were used to analyse these data. Models were validated using the 5-fold cross validation method.

Results

44 children were identified with CF at a mean age of 22 days. There was no difference in birth weight z scores between