

# Improving recording and reporting of dementia in pre-hospital care: a survey of ambulance staff who use an electronic patient record.

## Background

Around 45% of ambulance service attendances are to people aged 65 and above. Dementia is a common condition in this age group but is not systematically recorded by ambulance staff in the electronic patient record (EPR) at a call-out. This may lead to information being missing on handover of the patient between healthcare services and may have a negative impact on subsequent patient care and clinical outcomes. Adapting the design of the EPR to be user-friendly and to collect the most appropriate data requires input from the users. This study will identify the areas of the software where dementia could be best documented and provide an insight into the EPR users' experience so that we can work with the software provider to adapt the EPR accordingly.

## Methods

We are conducting a survey with a minimum of 100 front-line ambulance staff in one region, using an electronic questionnaire during training days over a period of three months. A draft survey has been designed with the SCAS patient forum and was piloted before use. The survey uses open and closed questions to answer the following research questions: (1) How do ambulance staff identify whether a patient has dementia at a call? (2) When recording dementia on the EPR, which areas do staff choose and why? (3) What are the current challenges in recording dementia on the EPR? (4) How can the EPR data entry screens and data output be improved to more reliably capture dementia and provide appropriate reports?

Survey data will be analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

## Impact

To enable knowledge of a dementia diagnosis to be clearly identified on the EPR, especially in the case of handover, referral or discharge to other services, it is essential to have a clear and consistent record which can be easily retrieved. The design of the EPR should be informed by the users (the ambulance teams), so that it is more likely to be completed consistently and meets the users' needs. The results of the survey would also identify areas for further training of staff and ultimately contribute to the continuity of appropriate clinical care being delivered, thus promoting patient safety.

## Funding

This project is part-funded by a small grant from the College of Paramedics.

## Researchers

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