

Poster presentation

Needle anxiety: assessment of need for intervention in patients with spinal cord injury and spina bifida attending a spinal injuries centre

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Background

Needle anxiety is a significant problem in a medical setting, affecting both service user and care giver. A needs assessment for needle anxiety has been carried out on Spinal Cord Injured (SCI) and Spina Bifida (SB) patients attending a regional Spinal Cord Injury Centre. The aims were to identify the number of patients reporting anxiety when undergoing venepuncture or receiving injections, to identify what the patient's beliefs were about, whether this was a problem and to identify whether they would want help.

Materials and methods

A self report questionnaire was developed, piloted and administered across a 6 month period. 231 questionnaires were returned: 188 in the SCI group and 43 in the SB group. Data were analysed using SPSS.

Results

There was a significant report of anxiety for both areas in both groups: 10–12% in the SCI group and 16–19% in the SB group. 11% of SCI believed it was a problem for them and 19% of the SB group, however only 4% of each group identified that they would want help. Anxiety report tended to be higher in females and younger age groups. Comments added to questionnaires indicated that there may be a sense of helplessness amongst patients, through lack of knowledge or previous unsuccessful attempts to overcome difficulties.

Conclusion

There is a clinical responsibility to address the level of need identified by this project. Five proposals are made 1) To further highlight awareness across staff; 2) To devise a suitable screen for general use; 3) To devise suitable and relevant information for staff and patients; 4) To devise a training and support package for specialist nursing staff for anxiety management in suitably identified patients; 5) To address issues in identifying relevant referral pathways for more complex cases.