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Title: A retrospective review of the first 6 month implementation of a new radiotherapy service for head and neck cancer

Body: Introduction

Head and neck cancer (HNC) services should be organised around specialist multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) which addresses psychosocial and physical factors 1 to reduce radiotherapy (RT) morbidity and optimize survivorship. Core members include Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS), Speech and Language therapists (SLTs) and Dieticians.

Aim

To implement a new radiotherapy service for HNC patients providing access to core MDT members whilst satisfying the national cancer Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of 15 days between “ready to treat” date and the first radiotherapy (RT) fraction

Methods

An established tertiary referral centre for HNC was contacted to review existing pathways. Collaboratively, the MDT determined an optimal pathway in accordance with international best-practice HNC guidelines.

Results

A multidisciplinary HNC pathway was successfully created (figure 1).

Since August 2024, 936 fractions of radical intensity modulated radiotherapy has been delivered to 30 patients. All started radiotherapy within the 15-day KPI and median time to start date was 11days (range 0-14 days).

714 multi-disciplinary appointments have been provided, with CNS being the most impacted resource (see figure 2)

Conclusion

A streamlined MDT pathway ensures the complex, multidisciplinary needs of patients can be met with a short median time to start RT.

Figure 1: Head and neck multidisciplinary radiotherapy pathway

Figure 2:MDT patient reviews in a new HNC RT service

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