

Establishing a Renal Assessment Unit to enhance access to specialist renal services pilot results.

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With acute services under increasing pressure, enhancing direct access to specialist renal services is thought to reduce contact with acute emergency services. This would facilitate rapid decision making for renal patients and would impact on hospital admissions and length of stay. We piloted a model of a renal assessment unit to provide operational data related to the feasibility and the impact of such unit on other acute services in a University Hospital.

A four bed area on a medical ward was converted to a renal assessment unit on a two week trial between the 13th and the 24th January 2020. The unit operated Monday to Friday 8am until 6pm and was staffed by a renal registrar and supervising consultants, Band 7 renal specialist nurse as advisor, Band 6 sister and Band 5 registered nurse. The unit rapidly assessed new referrals from acute service and GP's, and provided ambulatory care for patients know to renal services. A mobile phone was provided for the nursing team and one for the registrar to facilitate direct referrals. Posters where put in key areas to ensure all staff were aware of the pilot. A central booking system was set up, to allow direct booking of patients to ensure safe numbers, with provision made for emergency, on the day, attenders.

The total number of patients seen was 78, 5 were admitted to renal and 73 were discharged back to clinic. RAU prevented 7 ED visits and 29 MAU admission in the 10 days trial. 15-day cases went to RAU which would have gone into a bed on 407.

The two week trial period demonstrated the efficiency of the RAU model through preventing admissions and providing rapid assessments and decisions renal patients. Moreover, patients and staff experience was very positive. This pilot demonstrates the importance and need for innovative models of access to specialist services to ease the ever increasing pressures on acute services and improve patients' experiences and outcomes.