

Preliminary data demonstrating the impact of an ENT allied health practitioner service on ENT waiting lists at Logan Hospital

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Background

In Queensland the Ministerial Taskforce on Health Practitioner Expanded Scope of Practice (2013) identified areas where allied health practitioners could enhance patient services through extended scope activities. In light of significant concerns with ENT waitlists and waiting times at Logan Hospital an innovative ENT Model of Care was developed. Advanced Speech Pathologists and Audiologists managed specific patient groups from the ENT waitlist through extended scope of practice clinics. The objectives were to improve patient access to services, reduce ENT waitlists, waiting times and to streamline the patient journey.

Methods

Service establishment required stakeholder consultation, engagement and agreement, internal service audits, clinical protocol development and extensive training and credentialing. The steps involved in service establishment have been documented. Pilot trials of the extended scope clinics have been conducted with ethics in place for further full scale service evaluation within a research framework.

Results

Preliminary results captured from June 2013 to April 2015 have shown that a total of 684 patients have been transferred from the ENT waitlist into the ENT AHP Service. Of these 566 were managed conservatively and discharged without requiring ENT assessment and 186 were re-categorised to be seen by ENT. Overall results demonstrate that 82% of patients transferred were discharged without requiring an ENT appointment.

Discussion

The development of an ENT Allied Health Practitioner service demonstrates significant outpatient service reform and a fundamental change to service provision using an innovative model of care. The preliminary data and outcomes suggest that these clinics are an effective and efficient alternative model to support traditional outpatient medical service delivery and provide evidence to support future development of other extended scope of practice activities for allied health practitioners. Preliminary data suggests that 82 % of patients transferred into the service are able to be managed and discharged without requiring ENT appointments.

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