

Improving adherence to DVLA (Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency) guidance on driving in Eating Disorder patients in the Southern Trust in Northern Ireland

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Introduction

The Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) has a caseload of around 130 eating disorder patients. There is a nursing team lead, 4 social worker's, 5 nurses, a dietician, a registrar and a consultant psychiatrist. There was poor knowledge and understanding by staff on:

- 1) DVLA guidance on driving with Eating disorders
- 2) Lack of staff confidence in giving advice on guidance
- 3) Lack of carer and patient understanding of advice and DVLA guidance



Aims

To investigate the knowledge of and adherence to DVLA guidance and improve the competence of specialist practitioner's in providing driving guidance, by creating both patient and practitioner leaflets and designing a regional policy on driving with an eating disorder.

Hypothesis: It was anticipated that the lack of knowledge and guidance for driving in those with eating disorders, negatively impacted on adherence to DVLA guidance. A regional policy alongside leaflets for both patients and practitioners is anticipated to improve adherence.

Methods

We performed a regional retrospective qualitative survey analysing practitioners' competence and confidence in explaining factors affecting driving in patients with eating disorders, via a Microsoft forms survey.

Later we created a Southern Trust regional guidance on driving with Eating disorders and a staff information leaflet and distributed this to Eating disorder staff group via email.

Practitioners were then resurveyed after two weeks

Then a patient and family member education leaflet was made and circulated to patient and relatives. Afterwards 24 patients and family members were surveyed to assess adherence to DVLA guidance on driving with eating disorders.

Results

100% of practitioner's did not feel they had clear guidance on advising patients with eating disorders about driving and all expressed a wish for a regional policy on how to advise patients with eating disorders about driving.

Only 77.8% of practitioners felt competent in explaining the impact of BMI on driving. Less than 33% of practitioners felt competent in explaining the impact of all other factors surveyed (Fluctuating nutritional status, hypothermia, electrolyte disturbance and fracture risk). Only 56% of practitioners knew the DVLA guidance for people with eating disorders with either normal or low BMI.

On repeat survey 90% of practitioners were confident they knew and understood the DVLA guidance, were competent to explain this and 100% stated the leaflet and policy were "very beneficial"

Of patient or family member surveyed 80% felt DVLA guidance was clear and would "strongly agree" that advice or leaflet has improved their adherence to DVLA advice.

Conclusion and next steps

Conclusions: A regional policy on driving with eating disorders was created, implemented and is now accessible on trust Intranet. The leaflet for guidance for practitioners was circulated. On repeat qualitative survey, over 90% of practitioner's felt competent in explaining advice on driving with eating disorders and adherence to explaining DVLA guidance rose from 11% to 90%.

Both patient and family survey concluded that over 80% of patient or family member surveyed felt that the DVLA guidance had been A) Clearly explained and B) Were confident in practitioners' explanation of advice and C) improved their adherence to DVLA guidance on driving in ED.