

Do We Know if You Drive? A Quality Improvement Project Improving Compliance with DVLA Guidelines.

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Introduction

The DVLA guidance states that depression or anxiety associated with “Significant memory or concentration problems, agitation, behavioural disturbance or suicidal thoughts” must be reported to the DVLA (1,2). Thus, patients who present with depression/anxiety and an act of self-harm with suicidal intent should be advised by healthcare professionals to report this to the DVLA (1). Within our team there was limited knowledge of these requirements and driving status and subsequent advice was poorly documented.

This is an important area as driving is a complex skill which can be affected by psychiatric illness or medication.

- Driving is important for independence and sometimes for employment. Latest estimates show that about 80% of all adults aged 17 and over in England held a full car driving licence in 2020. (3)
- Mental illness has been associated with increased risk of accidents (4) with potential tragic consequences. (Image below (5))



Aims

- To identify whether information was collected on driving status of the patient.
- To establish whether accurate advice was provided and documented regarding informing the DVLA.
- To implement changes that would improve the team's compliance with guidance.

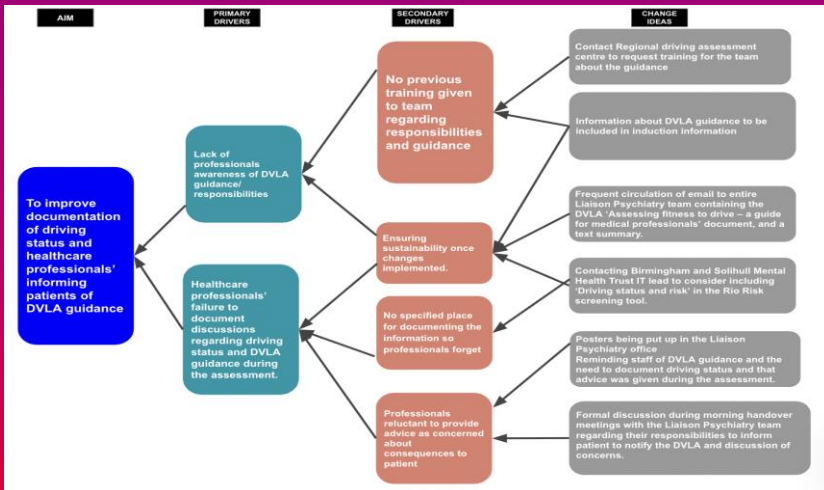
Method - Plan

Using PDSA methodology, we retrospectively audited a weekly sample of electronic notes of patient's presenting to the Liaison Psychiatry team (LPT) at Queen Elizabeth (QE) Hospital Birmingham with depression/ anxiety and an episode of self-harm. We collected baseline data for 3 weeks prior to commencing the project (October 2021) then weekly between 1st November and 5th December 2021. Cases were defined as: anyone presenting to the LPT at QE with an act of self-harm who was either on antidepressants (treatment for depression/anxiety) or had a confirmed diagnosis of depression/anxiety on their electronic record. Each week, the electronic notes of the first 10 cases presenting were reviewed for evidence of documentation of driving status and advice regarding DVLA guidelines.

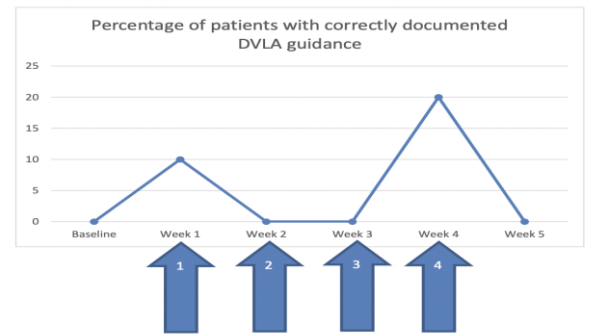
Intervention - Do/Act

1. Email to team informing them of the guidance, their responsibilities and where to document information (Week 1 - PDSA cycle 1)
2. Importance of driving status discussed in handover every morning to increase awareness in team and identify/address any concerns (Week 2 - PDSA cycle 2)
3. Email reminder to team similar to week 1 (Week 3 - PDSA cycle 3)
4. Posters put up in liaison psychiatry office of DVLA guidance and need to document driving status/advice given during the assessment (Week 4 - PDSA cycle 4)
5. IT department contacted and request made to specifically include questions about driving status of patient in risk assessment
6. Teaching to LPT by DVLA staff organized
7. Request for Trust Risk Assessment Training to include DVLA guidance for healthcare professionals

Driver Diagram



Results - Study



Data were analysed for 90 patients over 9 weeks. Average age was 33 years. 52% were female, 48% were male. Relevant documentation was only made on week 1 (10%) and week 4 (20%).

Conclusions

- Ensuring compliance with the guidance is difficult.
- Circulating emails appear to be the most effective intervention in improving compliance (as interventions were made on a Monday, so would likely impact the following week's data).
- This quality improvement project is ongoing and we may be yet to find the most effective intervention to allow us to move to the implementation stage.

Future Developments - Act

- Collect further data from patient's notes to see if recently implemented interventions (6&7 above) have improved practice
- Include information regarding driving in induction booklet so it become routine for all new staff to be aware of guidance
- Disseminating findings to other psychiatric teams across the trust via the clinical governance meeting and nationally via poster presentations to improve awareness of our duty as healthcare professionals to advise patients and document appropriately.

References

- 1) Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency. Assessing fitness to drive – a guide for medical professionals. Swansea: Department for Transport; 2021 p. 79-87.
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- 5) Mehboob Yaqub, Shajahan Ismail, Sally Babiker, T. S. Sathyanarayana Rao, Indian J Psychiatry. 2016 Jul-Sep; 58(3): 287–290.