

An evaluation of mental capacity assessment documentation by the Mental Health Liaison Team (MHLT)

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Aim

To examine the mental capacity assessment documentation of 60 patients referred to the MHLT.

Background

Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 was developed to ensure patients over the age of 16 are best supported to make their own decisions.

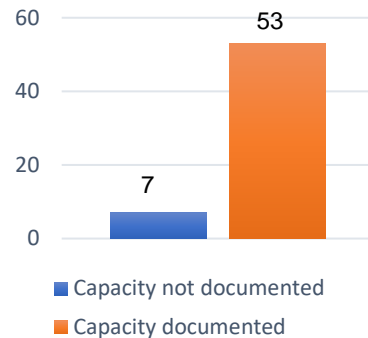
It should be decision & time specific.

Stage 1: Impairment of mind
Stage 2: Understand, retain, weigh up risks & benefits, communicate decision

Derbyshire mental capacity policy enforces the need for clear documentation, especially when decisions involve significant risk or consequences.

The Mental Health Act 1983 (MHA) emphasises that the mental capacity assessment should be used when reviewing capacity for the purpose of mental health care and treatment.

Number of patients that had capacity outcome documented



Method

Electronic patient record used for a retrospective analysis of 60 patients referred to MHLT between January to June 2021.

Inclusion criteria:

- Reviewed face to face
- Discharge letter completed
- First 10 patients from each month

Discharge letters reviewed to examine the documentation of capacity assessment.

Results

88% of discharge letters had a capacity outcome documented. Of these:

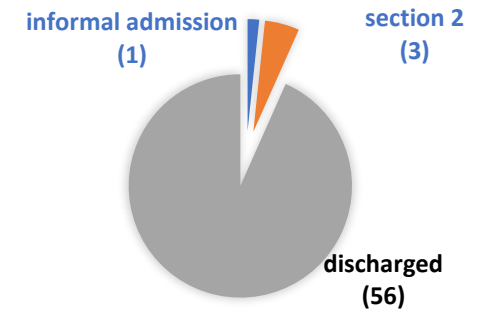
- 17% were not decision specific
- 42% did not comment on all aspects of stage 2 of the assessment, understand, retain, weigh up the risks & benefits, & communicate their decision

Of the MHLT assessments that resulted in detainment under MHA:

- All the discharge letters had a decision and time specific capacity outcome documented
- Only 1 recorded all the details of stage 2 of the capacity assessment
- 2 patients were deemed to lack capacity and 1 patient was capacitous.

Of all patients admitted, none of their discharge letters explained what specific information had been discussed regarding admission.

Outcome of assessment



Conclusion

Capacity assessment outcome was generally well documented, however improvements are needed to meet the standards set out in the Mental Capacity Act and Derbyshire mental capacity policy.

Stage 2 of the assessment was poorly recorded and improvements can be made to ensure all assessments are decision specific.

Inadequate documentation of capacity assessment for patients who were admitted, meant that it was unclear what information was given to them, to best support them to make their own decisions, as per the MCA.

Recommendations:

- Discuss findings at the next Mental Health Liaison Team meeting
- Provide education to the MHLT on the importance of mental capacity assessment documentation
- Re-audit in 6 months, to evaluate the effects