

Philippa Jones



Macmillan Network Lead Chemotherapy Nurse
The Greater Midlands Cancer Network.

Central West and Wales UK Oncology Nursing Society (UKONS) members have developed, designed and piloted the UKONS oncology/haematology 24 hour triage, rapid assessment and access tool kit.

It is a risk assessment tool that if used correctly standardises and supports excellent practice, improving quality and safety and providing evidence of service provision. The tool provides a robust framework for triage assessment, action and audit, and as a result leads to improved quality and safety in patient care by:

- ensuring patients receive a robust, reliable assessment every time they contact a helpline for advice
- ensuring assessments are of a consistently high quality by the use of an evidence based assessment tool
- advising on action and advice that is appropriate to the patients' level of risk
- ensuring patients who require urgent assessment in an acute area are identified and that action is taken, but also identifies and reassures those who are at lower risk and may safely be managed by the primary care team or a planned clinical review and avoid unnecessary attendance
- providing a framework for triage training and competency assessment for practitioners.

Development

The development process was methodical, professional and democratic and is an excellent example of team work. The aims and objectives of the project were clearly agreed and with the completion of the pilot and evaluation have been achieved.

The tool was intended for use nationally and has had a great impact on the provision of helpline care nationally and is now being developed internationally. The tool was released as a final version in October 2010, following the pilot and very positive evaluation. The majority of the pilot sites of which there were 27 in the first round and another eight in the second round have continued to use the tool.

The process has been adopted by at least 78 Cancer Centres/Units across the UK and 20 Cancer Networks and four health care providers to our knowledge, this number is probably a conservative estimate as many more areas are now implementing under their own steam.

Northern Ireland has rolled the tool out nationally and Scotland is planning to use the tool as a key stone in their national acute oncology pilot in 2012.

“You do not need a vast amount of funding to develop a good idea; the cost of this project has been minimal”

- Philippa Jones

The tool meets national recommendations within, NCEPOD, NCAG and Acute Oncology Measures that aim to improve quality and safety for patients.

The Greater Midlands Cancer Network have provided continuous support and allowed the project lead the time within her network role to develop the tool and roll it out nationally. UKONS have supported the development, pilot and distribution of this tool and have fully endorsed its use in practice. The National Patient Safety Agency funded and supported the design and pilot of the tool and endorsed the tool for use in practice. The National Cancer Action Team have promoted the tool as evidence of best practice in acute oncology.

The tool is being developed to support paediatric and primary care services, the group have linked with the RCN and the Macmillan GP lead. A comprehensive plan for regular review and evaluation will be developed and agreed once current developments have been completed.

This tool has been developed by a group of hard working 'shop floor nurses' who had the experience and vision to produce a nationally recognised tool. It required patience, determination and tenacity all of which the group have demonstrated in abundance.

If you have any questions about Philippa's case study please email Macmillan development manager Marika Hills MHills@macmillan.org.uk