

DVT SCREENING IN THE COMMUNITY

USING THE VENOMETER IN PRIMARY CARE



During 2007 several Primary Care Trusts looked into the possibility of setting up services to manage patients with suspected Deep Vein Thrombosis in the community. The benefits of such services include improved patient care and improved access since patients can be managed in a community hospital, care centre, or even in their homes. This newsletter highlights three community DVT services which have been established in the last year. Each of these services utilise the Venometer device as part of their DVT screening pathway.

South Birmingham Primary Care Trust

South Birmingham PCT introduced a new community DVT service in May 2007, and has already screened over 500 patients with suspected DVT.

The service is delivered by the Community Rapid Intervention Service (CRIS) Team. GPs in South Birmingham refer patients with suspected DVT to the service, and the CRIS Team then visits patients in their homes.

GPs and Community Matrons initially perform an adapted Wells probability scoring, and use this to categorise patients as low, medium or high risk for DVT. Patients categorised as low or medium risk are then referred to the CRIS team who visit the patients in their own homes within 2 hours and screen them with the Venometer and a near-patient d-dimer test. High risk patients continue to be referred to hospital. Patients who are found not to have DVT can be safely managed in the commu-

nity and do not require hospital referral. Those with positive results receive first line anti-coagulant therapy from the CRIS team prior to being scanned in MAU.

Emma Edgington, the CRIS team Matron, is delighted with the success of the new service, which has prevented 79% of the patients visited from requiring a hospital visit. Speaking about the benefits of the service, Emma said, "the new service has been well received by GPs and particularly by patients, who without community screening would potentially have had to attend at least one appointment at a busy A&E department. For the PCT it has made health care closer to the patients home a reality, reducing the need for costly assessment within secondary care," adding, "the support and timely assistance from staff at Amtec has proved invaluable in delivering this service."

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The CRIS Team from South Birmingham preparing to visit a patient in their home.

Hull Teaching Primary Care Trust

In November 2007 Hull Teaching PCT launched a new pilot service for patients with suspected DVT in the west of Hull. The service is designed to provide faster access to screening, diagnosis and treatment for those with suspected DVT, and to avoid unnecessary trips to the hospital.

The DVT screening pathway includes the use of clinical probability scoring, the Venometer device, and d-dimer testing.

Karen Lennox, Modern Matron for the PCT, has stated on the Hull Teaching PCT website:

"Around 620 people in Hull are referred for tests for suspected DVT every year. In the past, people have had to attend hospital for these tests, but for many patients, the community-based DVT service will make this a thing of the past.

By offering appointments and carrying out tests such as blood screening within a community location like the Westbourne NHS Centre, patients won't have to wait as long, or travel as far, to find out whether they need treatment for a clot or to be given the all clear".

Bradford & Airedale Teaching PCT

In May 2007 Bradford & Airedale PCT launched a new DVT service. Initially, a three month trial was performed and the results were audited.

During the trial, two teams within the PCT screened patients with suspected DVT in the community. One team, the 24 Hour Fast Response Service, visited patients in their homes to assess them for DVT. The second team assessed patients in another region of the trust, and performed tests at Shipley Community Hospital.

The trial proved very successful, and the DVT service has now been extended to include the Community Support team at Eccleshill Community Hospital. The Clinical Audit Report, written by Debbie Cromack, Senior Staff Nurse at Shipley Hospital, concluded "The three month pilot of a community based Venometer screening service for patients presenting to their GP with suspected deep vein thrombosis has generated positive feedback from both referred patients and GP practices across North & South West Bradford".

The DVT assessment pathway used (shown below) involves initial Wells probability scoring, followed by testing of low and medium risk patients with the Venometer DVT screening device.

