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Emergency Department Burns Documentation Audit

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Objective: To evaluate documentation in patients presenting with burn wounds and the appropriateness of referral to a specialist burns centre.

Methods: Documentation from patients presenting with burns to an Emergency Department in Sydney was audited from May and June 2020. Criteria provided by the State Agency for Clinical Innovation are used to ascertain whether a patient requires referral to a specialist burn unit. These include: the burn location, total body surface area (TBSA), and depth. The data was analysed to decide whether referral to a specialist burns centre was required and if a referral was made.

Results: Data from 47 patients was collected, 36 of whom met inclusion criteria. 11 (21%) of patients had their TBSA documented, and 29 (81%) of patients had the depth of their burn documented. 31 (86%) of patients met referral criteria, 12 (33%) of patients were referred by clinicians.

Conclusion: The majority of patients did not have their TBSA documented in the medical notes, although a description of the burn was often given. Often patients met referral criteria due to the location of their burns, with most being on their hands. They were usually small superficial burns and were managed without referral or discussion with the specialist burns centre. Despite meeting referral criteria, these patients may have been appropriately managed by ED doctors and nurse practitioners, with follow-up from patient's community doctors. Clinical guidelines should be used in conjunction with clinical judgement to decide whether referral to a tertiary centre is required.

Biography:

Rajeev Ram Graduated with Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery Degree from the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry, UK in 2017. Intercalated in Exercise & Sport Sciences at the University of Exeter, UK in 2015. Undertook 2 years of Foundation Training at University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire, and South Warwickshire Foundations Trusts in the UK. Currently works as a Senior Resident Medical Officer in Emergency Medicine at Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney Australia.