

OP29.2

Acute low back pain in primary care. A frequently presenting problem, often poorly managed

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Aim: To evaluate the quality of the initial consultation for patients presenting with acute low back pain to a primary care centre (PCC).

Method: Retrospective, descriptive, observational study with a target population of 582 patients from our PCC, between the ages of 18 and 65 who have presented with acute low back pain during 2014. Study population of 230 patients was used, separated from the target population by simple random sampling (confidence: 95%, precision 5%).

The variables used in the analysis were age, sex and six criteria recommended by the NICE clinical practice guidelines. Two of which were given recommendation C: information about characteristics of the pain (mechanical or inflammatory) (C1); radiation of pain (C2). Four with recommendation A: not requesting an x-ray at the first consultation (C3); initial treatment with paracetamol (C4); advice on posture (C5) and on physical activity/ avoiding rest (C6).

Reliability criteria (kappa index –KI-) and compliance criteria rate (CCR: %, IC95%) were studied. Prioritized corrective actions taken using the Pareto diagram. The Mann-Witney U test was used.

Results: Mean age = 41, 3±12,1. 56.1% of patients presenting were female. Showed adequate reliability criteria: inter-observer concordance between moderate and very good (KI) in the range 0.40-1.00.

CCR was: C1=36.1% (30.2-42.5), C2=89.6% (84.9-92.9), C3=80.0% (74.4-84.7), C4=15.2% (11.1-20.4), C5=5.6% (3.3-9.4) and C6=8.69% (5.7-13).

From the Pareto distribution, criteria C4, C5 and C6 together accounted for 74% of the problems in quality of the consultation. As these criteria were also those with the most impact on health outcomes this highlights them as a priority for future action.

Conclusion: The quality of the initial consultation in the PCC studied is poor. Measures that we will focus on, to improve the quality of the consultation, include improving the initial pharmacological treatment and putting greater emphasis on advice regarding posture and physical activity.