

Life, Death & Modern Technology – An Update

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Background


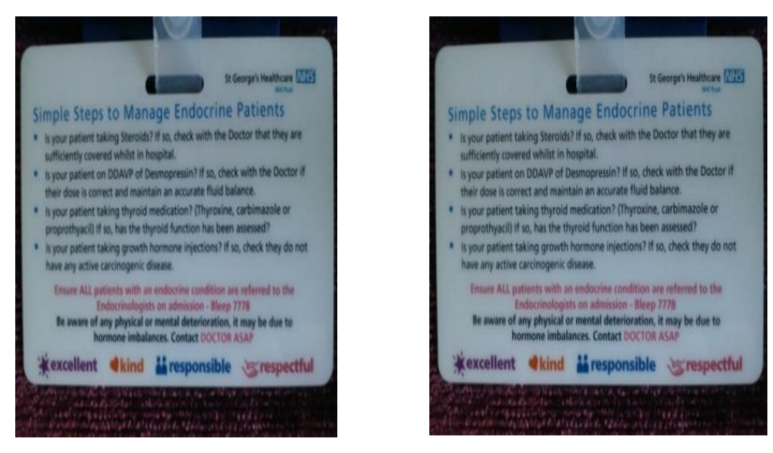
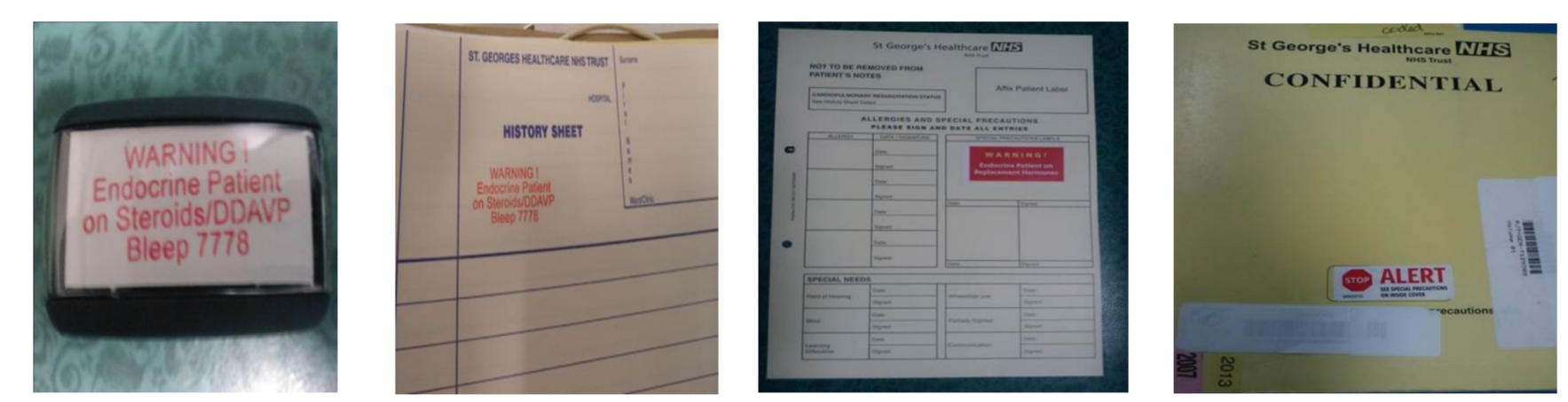


The initial question raised in 2012 asked this pertinent question.

'Could greater patient and professional awareness together with modern technology assist in preventing mortality?'

Data presented in 2012 identified a lack of steroid management knowledge in both patients and hospital staff. As a result of this, three areas of steroid management were addressed;

- Patient education through a 'Steroid Pack' and its electronic format
- Endocrine & steroid awareness of Qualified Nurses
- Documentation of steroid therapy in case notes

Implemented Improvements

					
Steroid Pack	QR Code	'Prompt' card	Warning stamp & stickers	Patient Video	Trust Steroid Protocol

Audited Update

The steroid pack, QR code and patient video were audited(55 responses from 120 questionnaires sent out)

- **Steroid pack** – after receiving the Steroid Pack, **20%** more patients now know the symptoms of a crisis compared to previously. **87%** know when to double their dose and **83%** found the pack helpful ; However only **50%** knew when they would need an emergency injection.
- **QR Code for steroid pack** – A QR code was set up enabling the Pack to be downloadable to Smart phones, solving the 'on the go' problem. **64%** found this helpful.
- **Patient video** – **29%** more patients than previously, now know how to administer an emergency hydrocortisone injection following the production of a patient video. For those with internet access **86%** found this useful. Worryingly, **63%** still did not have an emergency injection at home.

Improvements

- **Endocrine Awareness teaching sessions** – An audit of qualified nurses (78 returns from 500) showed that **60%** did not know what an adrenal crisis is, with **58%** not knowing that steroids should not be stopped abruptly. However, **78%** knew to contact the endocrine team if a patient on steroids was unwell. Endocrine awareness teaching sessions now run bi monthly to address the lack of steroid awareness.
- **Steroid/Endocrine Stickers & Endocrine stamps** - The case notes for all steroid dependent patients coming through the department are now issued with tailored warning stickers and alert stamps. A steroid Database has been set up.
- **Steroid protocol for Trust** – Steroid protocol written for Trust Grey book and Intranet

Future Plans

- Audit of case notes for warning stamps & stickers in 2015
- Assignment of 'Blippar' to upgrade electronic resources
- Audit of nurses trained in endocrine/steroid awareness
- 'Flag' alert on eprescribing and EPR

Conclusion

Lessons learnt:

- There is a vital need for the education of both staff and patients to reduce the risk of patients developing an adrenal crisis.
- Providing reference resources in hard and electronic formats provides access to vital information whether at home or away.
- It is imperative that patients have an emergency hydrocortisone injection at home and that they know how to use it.
- That education of qualified nurses in how to care for steroid dependent patients helps to safeguard patients who are hospitalised.
- The use of warning stickers, alerts and stamps 'flags up' steroid dependence in vulnerable patients.

With a few simple steps the answer to the question posed is **YES**, modern technology and greater professional & patient awareness could assist in preventing mortality in patients who are steroid dependent.

References

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