

TRIAGE AND GENERAL PRACTICE

WARM UP ACTIVITY

- ✘ While getting to know the people near you, write down on the paper supplied your favourite movie, book and meal.
- ✘ Now ask those people what their answers are and why they picked that answer.
- ✘ Now write down what you think the key issues with triage in general practice are (this bit we'll discuss later).
- ✘

CONTENT

- ✘ Definition of Triage
- ✘ Rationale for establishing a triage system
- ✘ Techniques and strategies for triage
- ✘ Documentation/risk management

“TRIAGE”

- ✘ Patient prioritisation on the basis of where resources can be best used or are most needed.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES????

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES

1. GP shortage-long waits for appointments, balancing act between patient safety and workforce pressures
2. Clinical risk-varying levels of experience, ability and clinical skill.
3. Legal considerations-increasing pressure to identify presentations which may constitute urgent or emergency situations

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

4. Practice Nurses-increased use of RN's and EN's in general practice but an absence of support for triage decisions.
5. Time

RACGP STANDARDS

✘ Criterion 1.1.1

- ✘ Our practice has a flexible system that allows us to accommodate patients with urgent, non-urgent, complex, planned chronic care and preventative health needs.

TRIAGE PROCEDURE

- ✘ Practice staff are required to ask a series of questions to assess a patient's health status to determine the urgency of their situation.
- ✘ In your groups please discuss what these questions are and why your group pick these questions.
- ✘ (10 minutes)

TRIAGE PROCEDURE

- ✘ Do you have an urgent problem?
- ✘ Ask:
 1. Name and phone number
 2. Age
 3. Nature of their problem
 4. Duration of their symptoms
 5. Severity of their problem
 6. Any previous major health problems.

TRIAGE PROCEDURE

- ✘ Assess the patient
- ✘ Make a judgement
- ✘ Prioritise medical need
- ✘ Implement accepted protocols or guidelines
- ✘ Document/report

TRIAGE PROCEDURE

- ✘ Wall chart guides/flip cards are an excellent reference to assist staff in determining the urgency of patients needs. Practice teams need to agree on guidelines /protocols.

TRIAGE PROCEDURE

- ✘ Essential components of guidelines:
 - Follow a logical thought process.
 - Trigger assessment questions.
 - Provide consistency
 - Identify high-risk patients or concerns

SUGGESTED TRIAGE CATEGORIES

- ✘ Emergency-immediate action
- ✘ Urgent-5-20 minutes
- ✘ Interrupt GP-ASAP
- ✘ Today-Same day treatment
- ✘ Within 24 hours
- ✘ And the real world.

PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

- ✘ In order for us to determine how to best assist you, Reception staff may need to ask you a few questions about your problem.

PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

- ✘ Talking with the patient (professional considerations)
- ✘ Layout of the surgery
- ✘ Volume of your voice
- ✘ Privacy agreements
- ✘ Computer access levels

PHONE TRIAGE

- ✘ Requires energy and focus!!!
- ✘ Listen for cues and the message behind the message
- ✘ Concentrate with a conscious effort
- ✘ Mentally review what has been said
- ✘ Avoid jumping to conclusions

THE DON'TS IN PHONE TRIAGE

- ✘ Don't argue or intimidated the caller
- ✘ Don't judge or blame the caller
- ✘ Don't use inappropriate slang
- ✘ Don't lecture the caller or minimise their concerns.

THE DO'S IN PHONE TRIAGE

- ✘ Do use open ended questions
- ✘ Do use clarifying questions
- ✘ Do use reflective listening
- ✘ Do reiterate instructions that you give the caller
- ✘ Ask if the caller is comfortable with the instructions

PHONE STRATEGIES

- ✘ Use the disclaimer:
- ✘ “Please take action if any of your symptoms worsen, or change.”
- ✘ This implies a shared responsibility with the caller.

DOCUMENTATION

Purpose of documentation

- ◆ Decrease legal risks
- ◆ Demonstrate standards of care
- ◆ Demonstrate quality and analyse quality issues
- ◆ Demonstrates the plan of care

RESOURCES

- ✘ The use of wall charts in conjunction with the triage support guide are excellent tools in the triage of patients.
- ✘ These resources are only good if staff are trained to use them.
- ✘ Understand that these resources don't cover every situation.

ROLE PLAY

1. A parent rings regarding their child, who has a rash, that has just appeared. The child has no other symptoms and the caller feels they need an urgent appointment.

ROLE PLAY

2. An elderly patient calls the surgery concerned that they may have accidentally taken twice their prescribed dose of their blood pressure medication(they have no symptoms at present).

ROLE PLAY

3. A 72yo male presents to the surgery complaining of chest pain which has developed as he was waiting in the pharmacy next door.

ROLE PLAY

4. A patient calls the surgery for a second time wanting to see a doctor about a persistent severe headache.

BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE TRIAGE

- ✓ Increased safety of patients
- ✓ Improved legal protection for practice
- ✓ Consistent decisions
- ✓ Guidelines provided for outcomes and timings
- ✓ Action/advice charts to assist staff
- ✓ RN triage support
- ✓ Policy support for practice for accreditation

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- ✘ Dandenong Casey Triage Support Guide-Cover, flip charts and wall chart
- ✘ <http://www.dcgpa.com.au>
- ✘ GP Access
- ✘ <http://www.gpaccess.com.au>
- ✘ South East New South Wales Division of General Practice
- ✘ <http://www.sgpn.com.au>
- ✘ Ballarat and District Division of General Practice
- ✘ <http://bddgp.org.au/triage>
- ✘ RACGP Standards for General Practice
- ✘ www.racgp.com.au
- ✘ GPA Information sheet
- ✘ www.gpa.net.au
- ✘ General Practice North
- ✘ GPNW

LAST SLIDE

✘ Thank you