Improving Recognition Among Healthcare Professionals of Sick Children Especially with Sepsis in a Hospital Setting

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Aim: Aid health care professionals in measuring essential observations and age related normal ranges of important physiological variables necessary to spot a sick child and institute early treatment of sepsis.

Methods: In 2016-2017 we devised aide memoir sized lanyard cards with on one side age related normal ranges of important physiological variables eg heart rate, respiratory rate important in assessing a sick child [based on APLS guidelines] and also on this side of the card highlighted the essential investigations to enter on Paediatric Early Warning Chart. On the other side of the card is clearly set out Sepsis 6 guidance showing parameters for recognition and initial treatment for sepsis. These cards were trialled and then distributed across the paediatric directorate and feedback was obtained via an online survey several months later.

Results: There were 21 responses from the paediatric directorate. 95% found the cards useful. Normal ranges were useful for 40% ;Sepsis guide 15% and 70% felt both were useful. 57% always carried their card and 43% sometimes. Respondents found cards helped identify sepsis 62%; aided communication 43%; enhanced confidence to treat 48% and reminded them of normal values 90%. All respondents felt the card was easy to follow and 14% wanted a larger font. Other comments were regard to keeping it updated and robustness of the card. Fifteen responded in free text that the card was very useful and valued.

Conclusion: The accessible nature of these aide memoir cards with normal age related variables for important physiological variables, essential observations reminder and Sepsis 6 guidance seem to aid practitioners at the frontline of acute consultations in an accurate assessment of potentially sick children. It therefore enhanced the likelihood of spotting the sick child but also enhanced decision making on diagnosis and treatment of sepsis.