

Qualitative study of weekend care for emergency medical admission patients and staff information leaflet

This hospital is taking part in a large study led by the University of Birmingham that aims to evaluate high-intensity specialist-led acute care at weekends (HiSLAC) as a means of improving the care of acutely ill medical patients admitted as emergencies. The study is funded by the NIHR. As part of this study, the researchers are conducting a qualitative sub-study to find out more about how hospitals organise systems for weekend care.

Where is the study being conducted?

The study is being conducted in the 20 hospitals taking part in the HiSLAC study. The hospitals have been selected based on the features of their systems for weekend care.

What does the study involve?

This study will involve a researcher visiting the hospital for several days and conducting observations on a range of medical acute admitting wards. The researcher will explore: how care is organised on weekdays and weekends and how this impacts on staff and patients; the reasons for local variation between hospitals in the way weekend care is organised; and the barriers and facilitators to implementing HiSLAC. She would therefore like to 'shadow' clinical staff from different professional backgrounds and grades as they go about their normal work on weekdays and weekends. She may also attend some meetings at the hospital, and will conduct short interviews with some staff and patients.

Observations

The researcher is there only to observe and will aim to be discreet and unobtrusive. She will take notes in a notebook, but will not record any patients' names, staff names, or other identifying details. No recording equipment other than a notebook will be used. She may ask some questions so she can understand what is happening, but will not try to change anything that staff are doing. If staff ask the researcher to leave for any reason, she will withdraw straight away.

Interviews

The researcher will also seek to interview some staff on the ward or elsewhere in the hospital. If you are asked to take part in an interview, she will try to find a quiet room in which to conduct this. Some interviews may be conducted by telephone at a later date, if this is more convenient. The interviews are usually tape-recorded as this helps with analysis so you may be asked to consent to this. These interviews are completely voluntary and if

you do not wish to take part, that's fine. You can have a minimum of 24 hours to decide whether you would like to be interviewed. The researcher will also arrange to interview a small number of patients on the ward. She will be sensitive to protecting confidentiality during patient interviews.

Confidentiality

All information will be kept confidential. All interview recordings will be assigned an anonymised code number, and the name of the participant will not be used to label any recordings. Any additional names, places or other identifying information mentioned during the interview will be anonymised when a final transcript is made. Any quotations or descriptions used in reports of the evaluation study will be anonymised, and details may be altered to further protect anonymity. Field notes from observations will also be anonymised.

Risks of taking part

The risks of this study are small. This study is **not** an assessment of individual or team performance. Care will be taken to ensure that individuals are not identified. Individuals have the option to decline being interviewed or to decline having their interview recorded.

Benefits of taking part

Individuals participating in this study will not benefit directly. However, this work will contribute to knowledge about the effectiveness of high intensity specialist led care as a means of improving outcomes for emergency medical patients, and will inform future efforts to improve the provision of effective weekend care in ways that are feasible and acceptable to staff and patients.

Who is organising and funding the project?

The project is funded by the NHS National Institute for Health Research.

Who has reviewed the project?

This project has been reviewed and approved by ***** ethics committee.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any questions or concerns about this study please contact Dr Carolyn Tarrant (contact details are shown on the next page). She will do her best to answer your questions.

If you would like to know more about the study, or would like to be given the results when they are ready, please complete the attached sheet and use the pre-paid envelope to send it back to us.