Improving delivery of Radiology Services within a Same Day Emergency Care Unit (SDEC)

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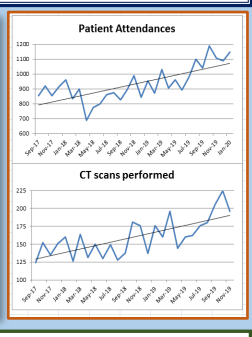
Background

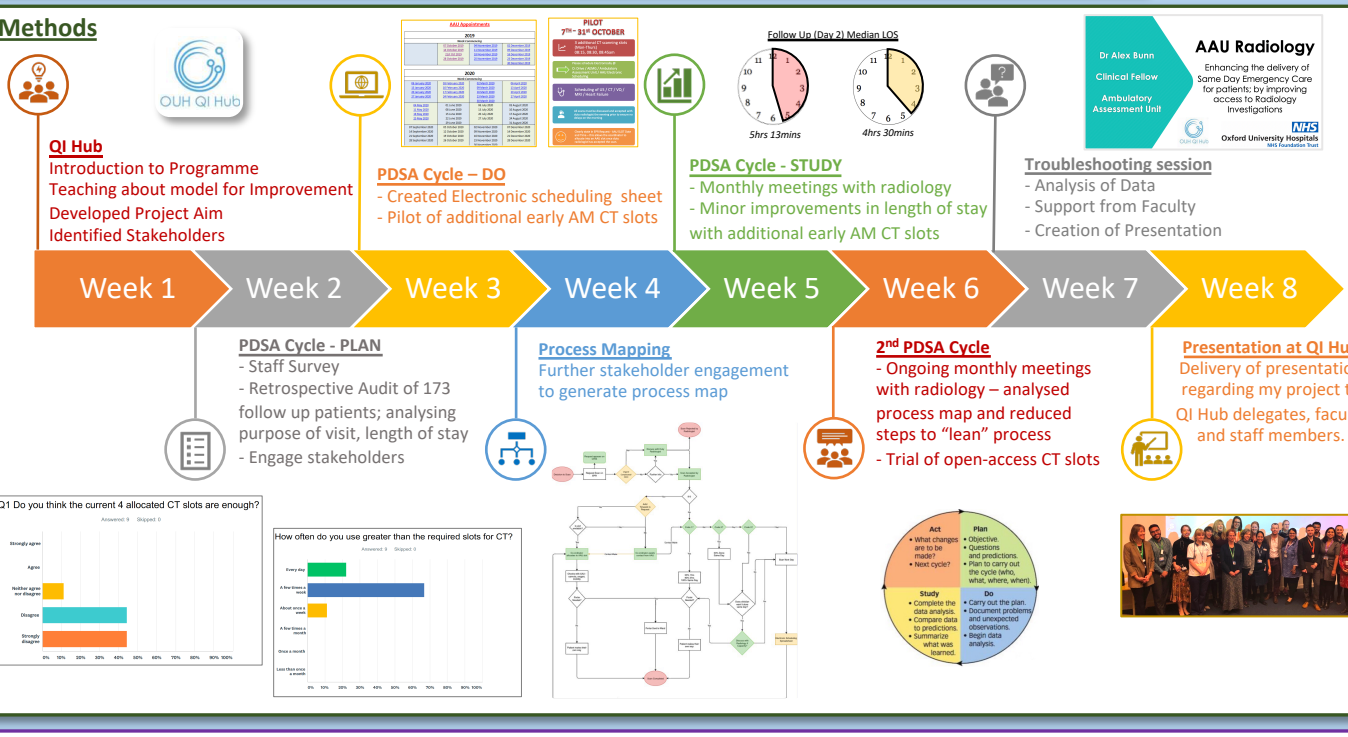
The John Radcliffe Ambulatory Assessment Unit (AAU) currently sees over 1000 patients a month. Over a 2.5 year period, patient attendances and CT scans performed substantially rose (As shown in Graphs on the right).

Due to this increasing activity, a significant proportion of patients requiring CT imaging have to return for next day investigations in dedicated time slots. Patient feedback has highlighted radiology delays as a source of poor experience, and furthemore, these delays can lead to difficulties for clinicians in formulating management plans.

The project aim was to reduce length of stay in patients who require a CT scan within their assessment.



Methods



Results

1) Staff survey feedback concurred that current capacity was inadequate for demand. Feedback demonstrated that multiple patients were being booked into the same CT slots – thereby causing delays for patients and frustration for staff. Delays in contacting duty radiologist was also raised.

Solutions

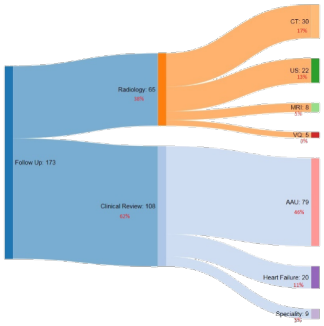
Creation of an electronic scheduling document to prevent any duplication, and engaged with stakeholders (radiology) to lean process of accepting CT scans.

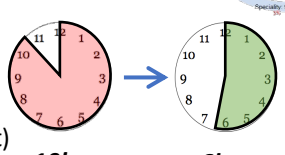
2) Analysis of 173 follow up patients revealed 1 in 6 patients were returning on a subsequent visit to primarily facilitate a CT scan. Average lengths of stay = 5hrs 22m (Day 1) + 5hrs 13m (Day 2)

Solutions

a) Implementation of open access priority CT scans (reflecting A&E practice) improved same day scanning capacity *(Time to Scan 1hr 10mins)* and reduced average department length of stay (as seen right)

b) If patients still require a follow up visit (e.g. due to out of hours) - dedicated early morning CT appointments managed to reduced Day 2 average length of stay to 4hrs 30mins.





10hrs 49mins → ***6hrs 16mins***

Conclusion and Reflections

The NHS Long Term plan envisions every major hospital providing SDEC. Our take home message from this project is that timely access to diagnostics is essential for the effective operations of same day emergency services.[1]

Subsequent staff feedback has been very positive and has identified further improvement areas; such as access to portering and availability of urgent MRI scans. We would also like to collect further patient feedback to assess if radiology delays are still perceived as an ongoing issue by patients themselves.

References

1 - https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/online-version/)

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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