



Achieving excellence in IBD transition care by introducing a virtual transition programme



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Summary of the project

Medical needs change in IBD during transition from childhood to adulthood, and medical services need to ensure patients have the services and support they need during this important time.

The IBD Virtual Transition Programme was designed by the paediatric gastroenterology specialist IBD nurses at the Bristol Royal Hospital for Children as a systematic pathway for young adults with a diagnosis of IBD to support their transition from paediatric to adult services. The virtual programme was created following recommendations by ECCO (2017)¹ and NICE (2016)²; and incorporating national recognised pathways (University Hospitals of Southampton, 2020)³ as well as innovative health strategies in which young adults could engage, such as the use of video consultations and other online platforms.

Aims & objectives

The aim of the virtual programme is to provide a consistent, holistic, systematic and dedicated pathway offered by specialist IBD health professionals for young adults with a diagnosis of IBD across the South West of England.

Methodology

The project is led by the Paediatric IBD Specialist Nurses in Bristol. The programme was developed over six months collaboratively with the wider MDT and other stakeholders.

Young adults (from 15 years old) with a diagnosis of IBD and under the care of the Paediatric Gastroenterology Department in the University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust received an invitation letter to attend virtually, then participated in transition sessions, before being transferred to adult services.

Transition appointments were held over video consultation on a platform called 'Attend Anywhere'. Patients had a minimum of two transition appointments and completed a questionnaire to help identify areas in which support was needed. This followed the NHS recommended "Ready, Steady, Go

Programme".³ An online survey was sent after each transition session and at the end of the programme, separately to the young adult and parents/carers involved, to evaluate the programme.

Results

Transition sessions have been held virtually, led by the paediatric specialist nurse in collaboration with the adult specialist IBD nurse. The journey of the young adult through the transition programme is individualised to his/her needs. Those needs are assessed holistically in each session, and it might involve different professionals in the programme.

As recommended by ECCO, a validated tool is used to assess the young adult's readiness to undergo transfer to the adult services. Using a standardised tool also facilitates the assessment of the progress of the young adult through the programme. For this programme, the transition tool "Ready, Steady, Go: Transition Programme" is used (University Hospitals Southampton, 2020).³

Some transfer clinics have been suspended at present due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the number of professionals in a clinic room have been limited. This has led to the development of a virtual transfer clinic.

Conclusions

The IBD Virtual Transition Programme provides a systematic pathway for young adults with a diagnosis of IBD which supports their transition from paediatric to adult services. It supports an integrated and individualised transition plan that facilitates all the professionals to be involved.

It is anticipated that, by meeting the adult IBD nurses prior to transfer, young adults will better engage, and that this will lead to improved adherence once transferred to adult services. The programme is accessible to the young person, reducing travel time, and therefore decreasing the health burden.

The programme is transferable and could be used in other geographical locations and within different medical specialities. Despite the pandemic, virtual services have continued, and virtual transfer clinics have allowed for continued smooth transitions.

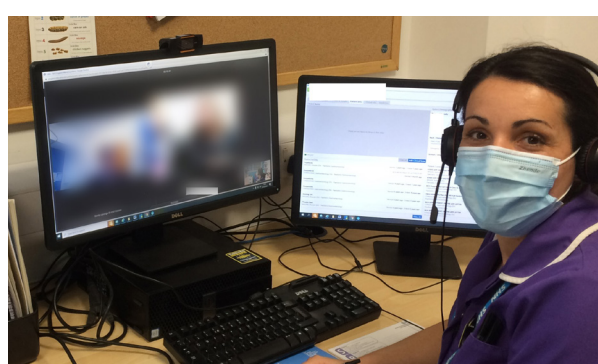
Further work

After the programme has been running for a year, the IBD specialist nurse will undertake an evaluation survey to assess the impact of the programme on the transition provision in the South West. The results of the evaluation online survey will be analysed and published.

It is proposed to audit the outcomes of the programme to present evidence of the programme's benefits and positive outcomes, and use this information to expand the programme to young adults of 13 and 14 years of age, and to all areas in the region.



Transition appointment with Pippa



Transition appointment with Elena



Bristol Royal Hospital for Children

Reference

1. European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation (ECCO) topical review on transitional care in inflammatory disease. *Journal of Crohn's and Colitis* 2017;1032-1038.
2. NICE (2016) *Transition from children's to adults' services for young people using health or social care services* [online]. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng43/chapter/Context>. Accessed April 2021.
3. University Hospitals of Southampton Ready Steady Go: Transition programme. Available at: <https://www.uhs.nhs.uk/OurServices/ChildHealth/TransitiontoadulthoodReadySteadyGo/Transitiontoadulthood.aspx>. Accessed April 2021.