

SCALES: Structured Conversations About Lifestyle in Emergency Settings

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Background

Emergency Departments (EDs) are an opportune place to provide health promotion and address risk factors for chronic disease^{1,2,3}. Whilst health promotion is widely advocated, it is rarely implemented successfully. The aim of the SCALES project was to scope current practice and develop and implement a structured approach to health promotion in ED.

Method

The methods of the SCALES project can be broken down into 6 distinct stages. Each stage was used to influence the next stage of the project.

1	Scoping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid systematic review of current literature⁴ Staff interviews and survey Audit of ED patient records
2	Co-Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop with ED staff focusing on alcohol Co-design meetings with patients with experience of alcohol problems
3	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are developing an ED health improvement curriculum We have created a reusable learning object (RLO)⁵ focused on alcohol interventions
4	Implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have implemented the health improvement model in the ED electronic health record The ED curriculum is coming soon
5	Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring simple digital solutions to utilise the time people spend waiting in ED to provide health promotion
6	Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCALES project evaluation coming Sep 2023 Learning will be used to influence pathways for a range of lifestyle factors

Conclusion

The SCALES project team will be publishing the full results of phase 1 and 2 in the near future. Over the next 12 months they will be focusing on phase 3-6. There has been an increase in health promotion activity in the department and the team hope this will continue as the project progresses and more lifestyle factors are addressed. Scan the QR Codes for access to our first online learning module on alcohol prevention and further information on the wider health improvement team working within Urgent and Emergency Care

Results

We now have the results available from phase 1 and 2 of the project. These results have been fundamental to the development of the ED staff health improvement curriculum that is currently being produced.

Rapid Systematic Review

Emergency settings are under researched and under-utilised for delivering health promotion, despite some studies showing a significant decrease in alcohol consumption and smoking in intervention groups. Alcohol interventions are acceptable to patients, but there are barriers to delivery.

Staff Interviews and Survey

Staff agreed health promotion is part of their role and recognised the benefits of discussing lifestyle factors in ED. Reported practice between different participants was variable and documentation of interventions was ad-hoc. Screening tools were often misused and referral pathways underutilised due to lack of understanding. A structured education programme is needed to upskill staff and formalise pathways.

Audit of ED Patient Records

34% of patients had an alcohol screening question completed, of these patients 3-5% were identified as drinking at high risk levels. 27.3% of patient records contained evidence of one or more risk factors, however only 1 record made reference to signposting for further support. Clinicians were more likely to document in free text boxes, rather than using formatted screening questions.

Co-Design and Workshops

These sessions highlighted the importance of a non-judgmental approach and patient representatives recognised brief interventions need to be done sensitively. The sessions influenced the creation of a new electronic template for documentation of screening, brief and referral activity for smoking.



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