

A clinical audit in haematology – Jenny Hersey

My elective project during the scientist training program was undertaken in the haemostasis section of haematology. As part of a blood sciences laboratory the clinical scientists have good links with this department and the consultant haematologist was keen to get me involved in carrying out a much needed audit.

National patient safety guidelines for anti-coagulation treatment state that it is vital that patients who are prescribed anticoagulants receive verbal and written information at the start of therapy. To audit this, a questionnaire was designed to ensure that patients commencing treatment were given the appropriate information. To gain further information additional questions were also asked to assess patients' view of their anticoagulant control, awareness and interest in novel oral anticoagulants (NOACs).

I took 150 questionnaires to the clinic waiting room and performed one-to-one interviews with patients who were happy to answer questions about their treatment. A further 350 questionnaires were posted to open access patients (those with stable treatment).

Results showed that 78% of patients stated they did receive written information when starting warfarin. Awareness of the NOACs was low, at 27%, and the majority of these had received their information from healthcare professionals.

Performing this large clinical audit gave me the opportunity to interact with patients and clinical staff as well to gain experience in audit design and complex data analysis. I was also given the chance to present this work at local departmental meetings and produce a poster for the British Society for Haemostasis conference.