

ONE BLOOD WITHDRAWAL A DAY; CAN WE GET BEYOND...: a multi-disciplinary experience in internal medicine units

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Background and Aims

Reducing unnecessary laboratory tests, and consequent excessive blood withdrawals, in hospitalized patients, with potential harmful consequences (i.e. pain and discomfort) represents a serious worldwide challenge. One blood withdrawal a day; can we get beyond...: is a campaign launched within the Ente Ospedaliero Cantonale and inspired by the principles of the Choosing Wisely Campaign, aiming to reduce the number of unnecessary blood withdrawals performed in EOC hospitalized patients, particularly in the internal medicine units of the San Giovanni Hospital in Bellinzona.



Immagine di sensibilizzazione Campagna EOC su
Choosing Wisely

Methods

Cross-sectional study conducted from 1st February to 30th March 2017, based on a multi-disciplinary intervention involving nursing, medical and laboratory staff. An awareness action for healthcare providers on the importance of reducing the number of blood withdrawals in order to improve the quality of life of the hospitalized patient, was undertaken first. To avoid unnecessary repetitions, at hospital admission, additional 5 ml of blood were taken and stored for further laboratory determinations.

Results

During the study period, additional blood of 400 patients was stored in the laboratory. 89 punctures were avoided, simply by requiring the lab to use the stored blood:

- I. 74 tests could be done with the residual blood stored as usual
- II. 15 tests were possible thanks to the additional 5 ml of blood kept

The objective of improving health care providers' awareness about the possibility to add tests on blood stored in the laboratory, with consequent reduction in the number of blood withdrawals, has been achieved.

Nevertheless, the amount of additional blood collected seems not to be justified if compared to the 15 punctures avoided.

The development of awareness, of the possibility and the relevance of performing additional tests using the blood normally stored for 5 days in the laboratory is certainly relevant.

Conclusions

Our experience confirms the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach, involving nursing, medical and laboratory staff to curb the unnecessary blood withdrawals in hospitalized patients. Further studies in our and other EOC departments could be helpful in understanding whether the proposed intervention can contribute to reducing the number of unnecessary blood withdrawals in a sustained way.