

Case Study: What does a challenge look like?

A team from the Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust has been focused on improving the lung transplant assessment process for high risk patients.

Their project focused on improving the lung transplant referral process for patients with cystic fibrosis. These patients often have to wait several months to be assessed for a lung transplant, potentially a significant proportion of their life expectancy. The aim was to reduce waiting times by making the process easier and quicker to navigate for both the patient and referring teams.

The team worked with different members of the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) – consultants, transplant co-ordinators, IT and specialist nurses, and most importantly the patients themselves. This gave the team valuable insights into their individual experiences and perspectives of the lung transplant referral process.

This was a complex challenge, so the team are exploring a number of different options to find the best possible solutions. Supported by the methodology learned on the Intrapreneur programme, teams at the Trust are now:

1. Carrying out monthly Skype-enabled multi-disciplinary transplant assessment meetings, initially between Harefield's transplant service and Royal Brompton's adult cystic fibrosis service, with a plan to include other referring centres. The first of these MDTs had a positive outcome, with potentially two bed days saved and, for the patient, less time spent waiting for transplant assessment tests.
2. Exploring the potential to carry out clinical tests locally, to speed up the transplant assessment process.
3. Drafting a business case to outline the cost and benefits of implementing a web-based system to automate the data collection as part of the transplant referral protocol, thereby improving communication between referrer and transplant centre. This should facilitate a more streamlined process for the transplant co-ordinators, in terms of co-ordinated data gathering, and will reduce clinical time spent locating test results. Better communication with local referring centres is expected to significantly improve the patient experience.
4. Reducing the in-patient transplant assessment time from a two-day overnight stay to a day case. This will help reduce the significant pressure on transplant beds.

Overall the Trust's aim is to improve the patient experience. The Trust will gather feedback from their patients and continue to improve their processes based on shared experiences.

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