Scarred Liver Project

Detecting liver disease quickly and easily using new technology in the community

Overview
Liver disease is the third leading cause of premature death in the UK. Around 70% of liver patients die in hospital and 20% die during their first admission.

The East Midlands AHSN's Scarred Liver Project comprises a community-based liver pathway focused on risk factors, integration across primary and secondary care and novel diagnostic technologies.

Fibroscan® is a painless procedure that tests for liver stiffness and provides a more accurate indication of disease, removing the need for invasive biopsy.

Results are immediate in showing the condition of the liver, allowing clinicians to agree a treatment path with the patient during the same appointment.

Results / impacts
The project has seen increased detection of significant liver disease – found in 20% of those having a scan in the community – with a three-fold increase in the diagnosis of cirrhosis.

73.1% of patients with cirrhosis would not have been identified through previous pathway / without new scanning technology.

93.7% of patients have said that they would recommend the service to friends and family.

Cost efficiency – health economic modelling demonstrates savings of £2,138 per quality-adjusted life-year (QALY) for non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and £6,537 per QALY for alcoholic liver disease.

More than 2,000 patients have attended for a Fibroscan® and received intervention.

The AHSN's role
East Midlands AHSN worked in partnership with the NIHR Nottingham Digestive Diseases Centre Biomedical Research Unit and funded the roll-out of the pathway across multiple settings with differing socio-economic characteristics in Leicester and Nottingham. It also provided specialist expertise to support adoption and spread of the pathway into clinical practice.

Adoption and spread
East Midlands AHSN is working with current commissioners and providers of the pathway to develop a commissioning business case for wider spread and adoption across the East Midlands. Based on the Nottingham and Leicester outcomes data, North Derbyshire has now adopted a similar approach and are implementing a new community liver pathway for patients from 2018.

Find out more
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