Atrial Fibrillation: detect, protect and perfect

Overview

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is the most common type of irregular heart rhythm. In England many people are unaware they have AF, and some people with known AF don’t receive optimal treatment, resulting in avoidable strokes.

The AHSNs collectively identified that the spread and adoption of AF best practice across the AHSN Network could make a stepped improvement in care outcomes, leading to a reduction in AF-related strokes across England.

Adoption and spread

Based on proven best practice across the AHSNs in recent years, 14 initiatives have been selected for spread through our national AF programme in 2018-20. Spanning the AF clinical pathway, this programme draws on our shared experience and intelligence to ‘detect, protect and perfect’.

Work to date

Detect: AHSNs are distributing more than 6,000 mobile electrocardiogram (ECG) units to GP practices, pharmacies and other community settings across England. This technology detects irregular heart rhythms quickly and easily, enabling NHS staff to refer patients for the appropriate follow-up and treatment.

Protect: A ‘virtual clinic’ approach targeting AF patients on GP registers who were not receiving anticoagulation, initially led by Lambeth and Southwark CCGs and King’s College Hospital, is now being rolled out by a number of AHSNs.

In this model, specialist anticoagulant pharmacists are commissioned to deliver virtual clinics in primary care, to support the GPs with evidence-based decision making regarding anticoagulation for patients with AF.

Perfect: The three London AHSNs have worked collaboratively with the London Clinical Network to develop an online interactive toolkit. This guides healthcare professionals and commissioners through the entire AF-pathway, providing a range of resources to improve the detection and treatment of people with AF.

Targets

By 2020 we aim to have detected an additional 134,000 people with AF across England, with an additional 100,000 people with AF being newly prescribed appropriate anticoagulation therapy.

Our interventions will:

- Prevent over 4,000 strokes.
- Save over 1,000 lives.
- Represent NHS cost savings of over £84 million and social care cost savings of over £100 million.

Find out more

www.ahsnnetwork.com/atrial-fibrillation