



An audit of in-patient consultations to Rheumatology department at Waterford University Hospital



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Introduction

Early assessment of patients with Rheumatological conditions is important for the diagnosis and management of the patient. In patients consults are an important aspect of the rheumatology service. A Rheumatology consultation form has been used for all referrals in Waterford University Hospital

Aims and Objectives

To examine the number, nature and quality of inpatient Rheumatology referrals in a tertiary referral hospital

Methods

All available consultations received in rheumatology department between March 2019 and March 2020, were reviewed. Age, gender, urgency, referral source and reason for referral were recorded using the consultation form.

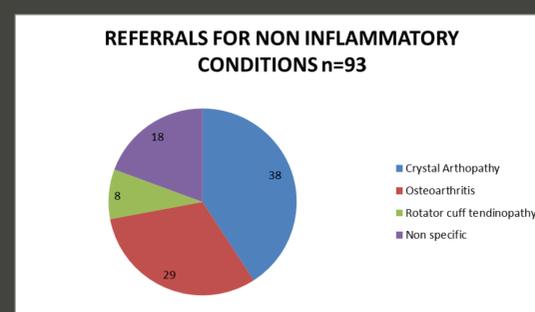
Results

A total of 134 (n134) in patients were referred to Rheumatology service from other departments, over a period of one year between March 2019 and March 2020. Out of 134 referrals, 75 patients (56%) were female and 59 (44%) were male. There was a great variation in the age the youngest patient was of 23 years and the eldest of 85 year.

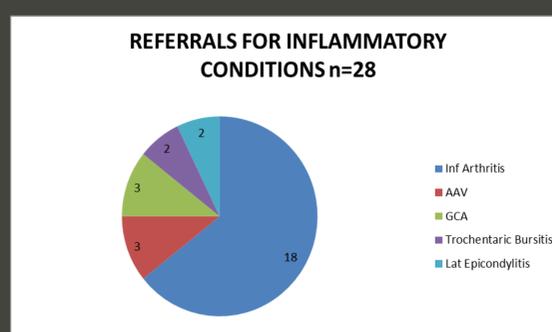
Results

90 patients (67 %) were referred by medical teams, 22 (16%) from Orthopaedics and another 22(16%) from Surgery and other departments including Ophthalmology, ENT and Obstetrics &Gynaecology. 31(23%) patients were known patients of the rheumatology service and were referred for review following admission with an unrelated illness. 103 (77%) referrals were for new patients.

The majority of the patients referred were for the management of crystal arthropathy including gout and pseudogout n=38, Osteoarthritis n=29 and Rotator cuff tendinopathy n=8 which were managed with intra articular steroid injections and/or NSAIDs and Colchicine. 48 patients needed intra articular injections.

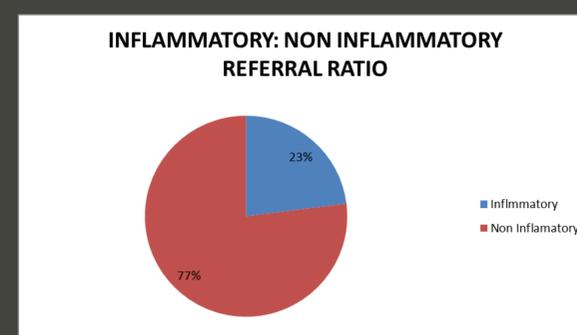


18 (14%) patients had new diagnosis of inflammatory arthritis, 3 each had new diagnosis of AAV and GCA. 2 patients each had Carpal tunnel syndrome, Trochanteric Bursitis and Lateral Epicondylitis.



Results

In 21(15%) of patients there was no clear indication for Rheumatology referral. Most of the patients were seen and managed within 24 hrs of the referral. Patients were followed as out-patients as required.



Conclusion

The majority of referrals were for crystal arthropathy and osteoarthritis. Further work is needed to educate regarding the management of crystal arthropathy and osteoarthritis among hospital teams, along with the education regarding indications to refer a patient to Rheumatology.

References

1. Rheumatology department University hospital Waterford