

The appropriate use of red cell transfusion in medical patients: results of the National Comparative Audit

- The NCA Medical Use took place over a week of choice between September and November 2011, with a 90% participation rate and over 9,000 cases audited.
- The ratio of haematology/oncology patients within the audit was 1:3.
- Auditors were assisted in determining appropriateness of transfusion by use of an algorithm that whilst complex was based on triggers, with caveats.
- Part 1 of the audit is completed whilst Part 2 is being analysed.

- The conclusions of Part 1 suggested excessive transfusion in three key areas; transfusion in cases of possibly reversible anaemia (20%), transfusion above thresholds (35%) and over transfusion.
- The second audit phase addresses the 4,818 cases eligible for further investigation. This is achieved by Consultant review of the cases.
- Of those analysed so far, in 25% of cases in the 'possibly reversible' anaemia group, transfusion could have been avoided.
- In the over transfusion group, body weight is a key factor.

- Extrapolation of the data suggests that 15% of medical patients are transfused inappropriately, 5% are for reversible anaemia.
- The reasons are because of significant symptoms/signs, inadequate identification and investigation of anaemia, and pressure to discharge patients.
- Plans now are to work with the Royal College of Physicians to address these issues.