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COMPLETED AUDIT CYCLE ON LITHIUM MONITORING ON OLDER ADULTS IN NORTHUMBRIA HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST, UK

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Aims: The aim of this study was to audit the practise of Lithium monitoring on all patients over the age of 65 years, over a one-year period in North Tyneside General Hospital, against the recommended standards, and re-auditing the following year.

Methods: During the audit; data was collected from the medical notes of all patients prescribed Lithium, over 65 years in North Tyneside General Hospital. This was from January 2004 - January 2005. The standards used were the recommendations of The British National Formulary. The monitoring of urea, electrolytes, TSH and Lithium were recorded. The presence of an ECG, documentation of side effects, information leaflets' distribution and patients lost to follow up were noted. Following the audit, recommendations were made and prescribing Consultants were informed. A re-audit was conducted on all patients on Lithium the next year from January 2006 - June 2006, using the same designed tool.

Results: 22 patient's notes were audited and 29 notes re-audited. 41% were males and 59% females in the audit, with similar distribution in the re-audit. 54% were between 65-75 years and 45% over the age of 75years in the audit. 41% and 59% respectively in the re-audit. Blood monitoring followed the standards in 86% in the audit and 95% in the re-audit. 32% had documentation of side effects in the audit, increasing to 72% in the re-audit. While 23% patients were lost to follow up in the audit, all were followed up in the re-audit.

Conclusions: The re-audit encouragingly showed significant improvement in practise.