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## INTRODUCTION OF PREGNANCY TESTING INFORMATION SHEETS FOR PAEDIATRIC PATIENTS

*S. J. Gilliland, The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, UK*

### Introduction

Anaesthesia and surgery during pregnancy poses a risk to the foetus. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Health Protection Agency state that pregnancy testing is required before radiological and surgical procedures for female patients post menarche.[1] Within the paediatric patient population, females aged 12 to 16 years should therefore receive pregnancy testing prior to anaesthesia and surgery. When reviewed, it was noted that local guidance at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children required updating and information leaflets targeting these young patients were required. The aim of this project was to produce an information leaflet that explained this potentially sensitive topic to these young patients.

### Methods

Guidance relating to pregnancy testing for patients between 12-16 years of age was reviewed. The Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health provides extensive guidance on this topic including an example patient information leaflet.[2] NICE advises that all females of child bearing age should receive communication regarding the need for pregnancy testing, including the risks to the foetus associated with the anaesthetic and procedure. AAGBI advises that paediatric patients and their guardians should be treated with respect when providing them with information regarding perioperative investigations and management to allow them to make informed decisions.[3] A draft information sheet was then created and disseminated to senior anaesthetic and nursing staff for review and feedback.

### Results

A patient information flyer has been created that can be understood by female patients 12 years old and above. The leaflet sensitively and clearly communicates that pregnancy testing is carried out as standard in this institution for all girls aged 12 years or over as per national guidance. It explains that the hospital staff will work discreetly with the patient to maintain confidentiality and dignity, that pregnancy testing is non-invasive, and the leaflet also informs the patients of the risk posed to the foetus. The primary target audience of the leaflet is the patient, but it is expected that the guardians will also utilise this resource.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The authors are satisfied that the patient information leaflet that has been created is pitched appropriately for the target audience of female patients ages 12 years and above and their guardians. The information leaflet uses language that the patients will be able to understand yet not find condescending. The leaflet is also intended to be read by patient guardians and address queries that they might hold regarding the indication for pregnancy testing their child.

## Reference

[1]NICE guideline [NG45] Published date: April 2016. [2] RCPC . Pre-procedure Pregnancy Checking for Under 16s: Guidance for Clinicians. 2012