

Audit of Sensory Boxes provided across DME Wards at GRI

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Background

Audio and visual impairments are a significant health burden on Medicine of the Elderly wards. Up to 35% of over 75s have age-related hearing loss (1), with up to 13% developing visual impairments (2). Without access to functioning hearing aids or glasses, these patients will find it difficult to engage with their care whilst inpatients in hospital. We carried out an audit of sensory boxes to see what provision is made on the wards to help these issues.

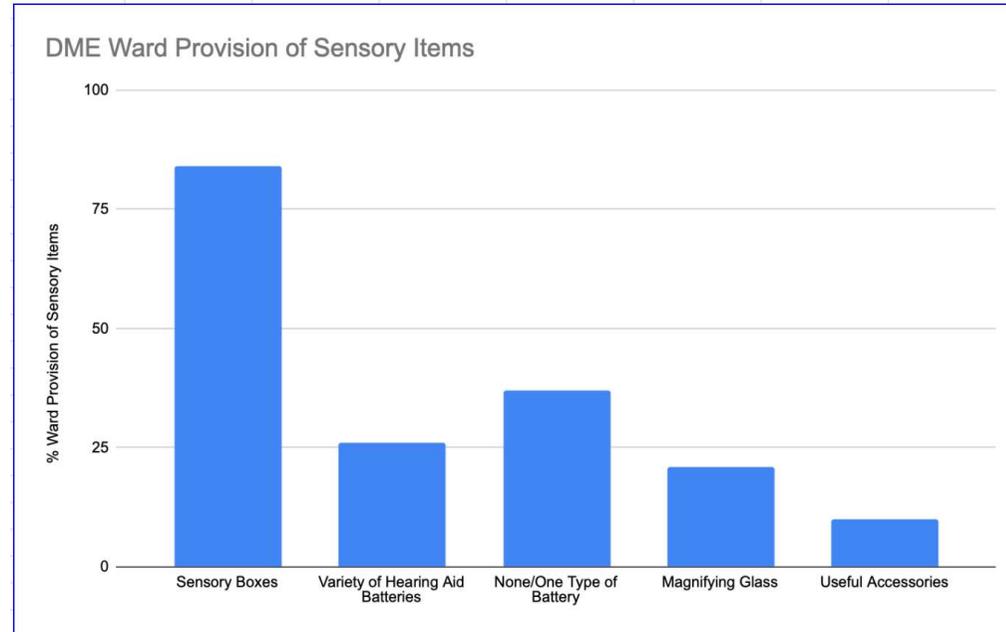
Method

We asked all DME wards across the GRI, Stobhill and Lightburn -

1. Do you have a designated sensory box?
2. What types of hearing aid batteries do you have?
3. Do you have a magnifying glass on the ward for patient use?

Conclusion

Whilst some wards already provide good assistance to patients with sensory impairments, there are some simple changes that can be made to improve how patients with sensory impairments are cared for. Provision of standardised sensory boxes, with an appropriate variety of hearing aid batteries, magnifying glasses and accessories, alongside staff education about the simple quick fixes to try for a reportedly broken hearing aid/reading glasses, would help to keep these patients engaged in their care.



Results

- Staff in only one of the 19 wards knew there was a sensory box on the ward.
- Most wards (16/19) had spare hearing aid batteries in various drawers.
- Five wards provided spare batteries of the main three types (blue/orange/brown), four wards only had one type of battery.
- Four out of 19 wards had magnifying glasses available, with a further 5 having an assortment of glasses for patient use.
- Two wards provided useful accessories, such as spare hearing aid tubes and glasses screwdrivers.

References: (1) Livingston, G. *et al* 2020. Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2020 report of the Lancet Commission. *The Lancet*, 396(10248), pp.413-446. (2) Evans JR *et al* 2002. Prevalence of visual impairment in people aged 75 years and older in Britain: results from the MRC trial of assessment and management of older people in the community. *British Journal of Ophthalmology* 86:795-800.