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Background:

Primary and secondary care communication is the cornerstone of patient's care. Proper dialogue should be established. The shared care protocol was an attempt to try to fill gaps and build bridges .

Methods:

A special form was designed to collect information about psychiatrists' opinion on GPs' referral letter to psychiatric services. It contained 14 items, each item was marked as essential, can be included or irrelevant. This form was sent electronically to psychiatrists in Southessex University NHS Trust. They are 98 in total. It was input on Excel data sheet and was analysed.

Results:

43 psychiatrists responded

All respondents agreed that reason for referral is essential.

Concise description of the condition, risks and current medication were rated as essential in more than 90 %.

Past medical history, past psychiatric history and current physical health were essential in 79 % .

Discussion:

All professionals involved should participate in evaluating and refining communication. Psychiatrists' opinion in GPs letters is paramount as they are the recipients and their assessments and future management plan should be geared to address the GP's concerns. This is shown clearly by the psychiatrists agreeing that reason for referral should be included in all letters, followed by what the GP has already done and what risks the patient presents.

Conclusion:

Improving communication between health professional, improve patient's care, saves time and money, in addition to prevent duplication of investigation and procedures.