

Reducing the use of spray to check cold sensation

Aim

Ethyl Chloride is a local anaesthetic spray that in the Royal Bournemouth Hospital trust is used only to provide a sensory cold sensation to check spinal and epidural anaesthesia blocks. Our Recovery team looked at the environmental impact, and decided to set an aim to reduce the usage of Ethyl Chloride spray in RBH Recovery from 4 cans per week to 1 or less.

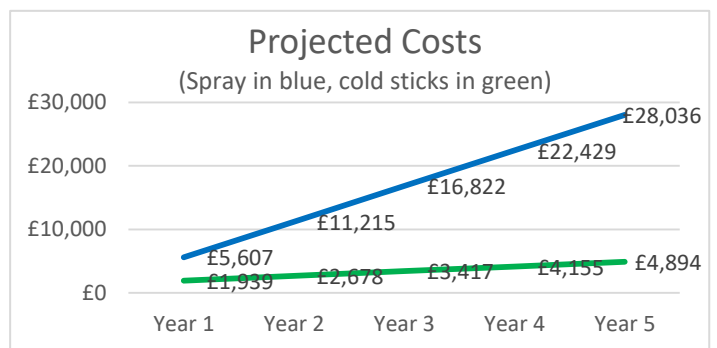
Improvements and measurements

We began by gathering baseline data for 2 weeks on how much Ethyl Chloride spray we were using across two areas – Main Recovery and Derwent Recovery. We then looked at reasonable alternatives to the spray, including ice packs and wet wipes. Through experimentation we ended up with stainless steel sticks with handles, which are kept in the fridge, and can be held against skin to provide a cold sensation. This is very much a “Back to the future” approach - as these were used in the 1970s and 80s!

We then ran a 6 week pilot in the aforementioned Recovery areas. By reviewing audit forms on a weekly basis, we were able to gain staff and patient opinion on their experience of using the sticks. We were also able ensure that accurate results were being achieved, and clinical care was not being compromised. By assessing how many cans were being used alongside the stick we were able to measure compliance and effectiveness of the alternative.

There's lots of little things we can do to help protect the environment and cut costs as well – staff member surveyed

**We are saving
2,968 Kg of CO₂ per year**



Outcomes and lessons learnt

Our work will reduce the cost of spray by £23,000 over a 5 year period, and be much better for the environment - in terms of CO₂ from the gas itself, its transportation and recycling. We are now rolling out across main theatres, where the savings should be yet another £25,000. We also want to expand the learning to Poole and even wider.

This project has shown us that others feel as strongly as we do about protecting our environment... we must harness the power of group influence to make a difference.

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