

Scalp Cooling

Introduction, Integration, Improvement to everyday practice!

Alison Lovett-Turner and Helen Rasdale,
Oncology & Haematology Practice Development Nurses

Background

We introduced Scalp Cooling with the Paxman device in 2017 as part of a Quality Improvement (QI) project, through our Trust's QI academy. Once it was launched and running well, we looked to launch the service in our satellite site in another county. However, staff shortages were delaying the project there. This led to a difference in available patient services depending on the patient's postcode. Therefore, an Oncology and Haematology Practice Development nurse was seconded to the satellite centre to launch Scalp Cooling and its success was replicated there.

Methods

These included: a literature review and analysis, QI project, business case and funding application, governance and policy writing, educational launch and training. All of which was repeated at our satellite cancer centre.

Results

We have no limits of regimens that can include scalp cooling, including desensitisation regimens which require longer cooling times, for any solid tumour treatment that includes an alopecia causing agent.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic our services and delivery of treatments changed, which included splitting our department across different locations in the hospital to accommodate social distancing. Consequently, our Healthcare Assistants (HCAs) who were trained to fit cold caps were no longer available. Then, we trained a team of volunteers, with Paxman's support, to fit caps and provide patient education. Since then, the majority of cold cap fitting has been continued by our volunteers.

Overall, patients who have scalp cooling at our Centre have good hair retention success, low dropout rates and a positive experience.

Conclusion

Scalp Cooling is an integrated part of chemotherapy treatment for our team and our patients. We continue to offer this option for managing the often-devastating side effect of hair loss to patients as much as possible. The volunteer team has made a huge impact on patients as they have the time to spend fitting the caps, contributing to a positive patient experience and the opportunity to develop their role in supporting patients and the nursing team. Additionally, Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapies (SACT) trained nurses have more time to complete other duties.

Our Volunteers & Time Savings

We have 5 scalp cooling trained volunteers who supported 261 patients during 2022, approximately 21 patients a month. Taking an estimated 20 minutes to prepare a patient, equates to approximately 87 hours a year, enabling registered nurses to regain this time to carry out other duties including administering treatments.



Patient Feedback

"I was so scared coming into the ward but the volunteer was amazing. So comforting and kind, and made me feel at ease. It wasn't as bad as I feared. Thank you."

"I think using volunteers to fit the scalp cooling caps is an excellent idea. It frees up the nurses and allows the volunteers to spend time explaining the process and answering questions. I would thoroughly recommend it. The scalp cooling has worked well for me. Although it is slightly uncomfortable initially, I have coped with it and it has allowed me to retain some hair."



Volunteers' Feedback

"I find this an extremely satisfying role. I enjoy meeting patients and ensuring their experience of scalp cooling is the best it can be. I feel we provide valuable support, freeing up nurses' time that can be better spent. I have been scalp cooling for 3 years and intend to carry on as long as there is a need."

Paxman : Pioneers in Scalp Cooling



Paxman have been pioneering scalp cooling technology for over a quarter of a century to support patients in minimising hair loss during chemotherapy. The clinically proven Paxman scalp cooling system helps tens of thousands of cancer patients every year, in more than 60 countries worldwide, to retain their hair during chemotherapy.

Scalp cooling efficacy varies based on a series of factors, with the chemotherapy drug regimens being the primary factor. Taxane-based regimens see the highest rates of hair retention (van den Hurk et al, 2012) and although anthracycline regimens see a



"A lovely volunteer fitted my 1st cap and was very honest and reassuring about everything. She held my hand and spoke the whole time and I didn't realise it had started!! She also did my 2nd cap and was just as lovely. I hope to have her all the way through. The scalp cooling is not as bad as I thought, the first few minutes are the worst then I don't notice it."



"I think having volunteers fit cooling caps is a really good thing. I have had the same lady fit mine on most occasions. She's so welcoming and friendly when I come onto the ward. The scalp cooling process is easy and although it feels very cold for the first 5-10 mins it is not uncomfortable, and soon settles down. It is worth knowing that it will help my hair to grow back well, after my chemo sessions."

"Firstly, can I say I love my role. When a patient comes in for their first treatment, they are often frightened and unsure of the unknown. I see it as my responsibility to put them at their ease. I think it is very important we offer cold caps. We have a high success rate and to some patients, for various reasons, losing their hair is a step too far, although we do explain they can lose some."

"This is a hands-on volunteer role that is hugely satisfying. It's an opportunity to build rapport with patients at a difficult time and, if possible, to encourage them and "lighten" their day."

lower level of efficacy, scalp cooling with anthracyclines is still beneficial (Kinoshita et al, 2019).

The majority of people choose to scalp cool to retain their hair, but increasingly there is an additional motivation in the form of faster, healthier, and stronger hair regrowth as a result of scalp cooling.

New Paxman System Coming Soon...

Our Trust is investing in Paxman's latest scalp cooling system, having raised the funds through our local charity. We aim to provide the most efficient cold cap experience to patients and a positive experience

