

Self-application of Scalp Cooling for Preventing Chemotherapy Induced Alopecia

Natasha Ivens, Guy's Cancer Centre, Guy's & St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust

Background

In 2023, our chemotherapy unit needed to replace several scalp cooling machines. Charitable funding was granted on the basis that a new patient initiative was commenced. To achieve this, our nursing team are introducing self-application of scalp cooling, seeking to innovate practice, enhance patient engagement and confidence, overall increasing resource efficiency.

Scalp cooling has been proven to reduce chemotherapy-induced hair loss and improve patient's psychological and social wellbeing (Haksöyler *et al.*, 2021). Our vision is that by implementing self-application within our service we can elevate these benefits to a higher standard.

Methods

- An audit was completed over a four-week period collating numbers of individuals that use scalp cooling at Guys Chemotherapy Village and Queen Mary's satellite unit. The data showed 32% of eligible patients did opt to use scalp cooling, the majority from prostate, gynaecological and breast tumour groups. This highlighted the importance of continuing this service.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total
Patients eligible for scalp cooling	130	134	134	148	546
Patients opted for scalp cooling	44	45	45	41	175

- We created a patient information webpage to educate and instruct patients on self-application and sourced individual patient feedback. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data gave us a broader scope of understanding which enhanced our approach to the project.
- The nursing team are working with manufacturers creating a virtual hub, which features a detailed instruction guide on the self-application process.
- Paxman and the Cancer Hair Care charity will further educate and train the nursing and volunteer staff, ensuring patients are supported to the best of our ability throughout this process.
- Areas within the unit were identified for styling stations and have been carefully designed for patient use.

Eligibility criteria for scalp cooling:

- Treatment regimens that cause total hair loss rather than hair thinning
- We do not offer to patients with: haematology cancers, neurological cancers, brain metastasis, head wounds and severe migraines

The most common tumour groups requiring scalp cooling, chosen as the targeted patient groups for this project



Results

We received positive feedback on the patient information webpage. Patients scored 80-100% that the information provided was helpful, easy to understand, there was sufficient detail, and they felt represented.

The intended means of obtaining the results for the project will be patient surveys and staff feedback, the data for this is pending.

	Average score
The information is helpful	100%
The information is easy to understand	80%
I feel represented in this content	80%
There is the right amount of detail	80%

Conclusion

Self-care and efficiency are the key focus of this project. Our vision is to see an increase in patient empowerment, engagement, self-confidence, and a visible reduction in staff time. Therefore, making a positive contribution towards our patients emotional, psychological, and physical well-being whilst keeping the service running effectively.

References: Veysel Haksöyler, Tolga Koseci, Polat Olgun, Ertuğrul Bayram, Mehmet Ali. (2021). Effectiveness and Reliability of Scalp Cooling in Preventing Hair Loss Caused by Chemotherapy. *Kocaeli Medical Journal*. 10(2), pp.133-140. [Online]. Available at: 10.5505/kt.2021.53325 [Accessed 15 May 2024].

Date of preparation 11/10/24