

Project Title

HEADSS-Up: To improve the % of HEADSS assessment compliance for Paediatric Inpatient Wards

Project Lead and Members

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Organisation(s) Involved

KK Women's and Children Hospital

Healthcare Family Group(s) Involved in this Project

Medical, Healthcare Administration

Applicable Specialty or Discipline

Healthcare Administrators, Paediatrics

Project Period

Start date: July 2021

Completed date: April 2023

Aims

Aim to improve % of Compliance for HEADSS assessment performed by doctors on all eligible paediatric inpatients upon positive screening by nurses from 40% to 70% within 6months in KK Hospital.

Background

A recent Singapore study found one in three adolescents suffering from mental health symptoms with suicide being the major cause of death. Other important morbidities amongst adolescents include drug and alcohol use, mood disorders, eating disorders, sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancies. HEADSS assessment tool is routinely used amongst 12-18 years old admitted to paediatric wards since 2017 to facilitate communication and screen for important psychosocial risk factors. However, in a hospital-wide assessment conducted in April 2021, we found a gap in administration of HEADSS screening amongst hospitalized adolescents.

Methods

See poster appended/below

Results

Data extracted during pre- (July 2021 to October 2022) and post- implementation period (August 2022 to April 2023) were analysed and presented weekly in a run chart. Comparing pre-implementation data with baseline of 37 percent, post implementation results for percentage compliance for HEADSS assessment to be performed on paediatric patients improved to 85 percent. Using chi-square, improvement is statistically significant p-value less than 0.001.

For patients with positive HEADSS assessment, 64 percent were referred to mental health providers (24 percent to medical social workers, 14 percent to dietitians, 12 and 8 percent to psychology and psychiatry respectively, 3 and 1 percent to adolescent nursing, CHAMPS and Art therapy respectively. 36 percent were referred to other medical or surgical sub-specialties. Early intervention was necessary to help these patients improve their mental health.

Conclusion

The referral rate of patients screened positive after HEADSS assessment was performed went up to 142% (referral rate includes mental health providers and other

medical or surgical sub-specialties). Although the team did not analyse this as a balancing measure (limitation of this project), the appropriate referral to mental health providers as early interventions will be able to help these patients improve their mental health.

Project Category

Care & Process Redesign

Quality Improvement, Workflow Redesign

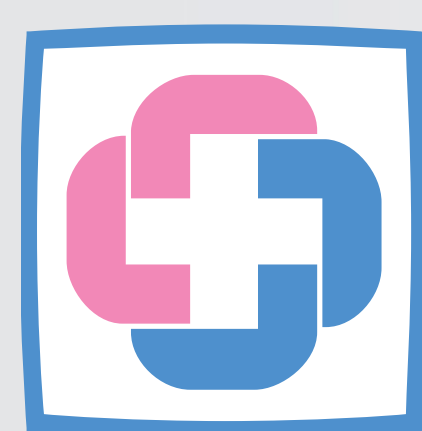
Keywords

Mental Health, HEADSS Screening, Paediatric, Medical Social Workers, Psychology, Psychiatry

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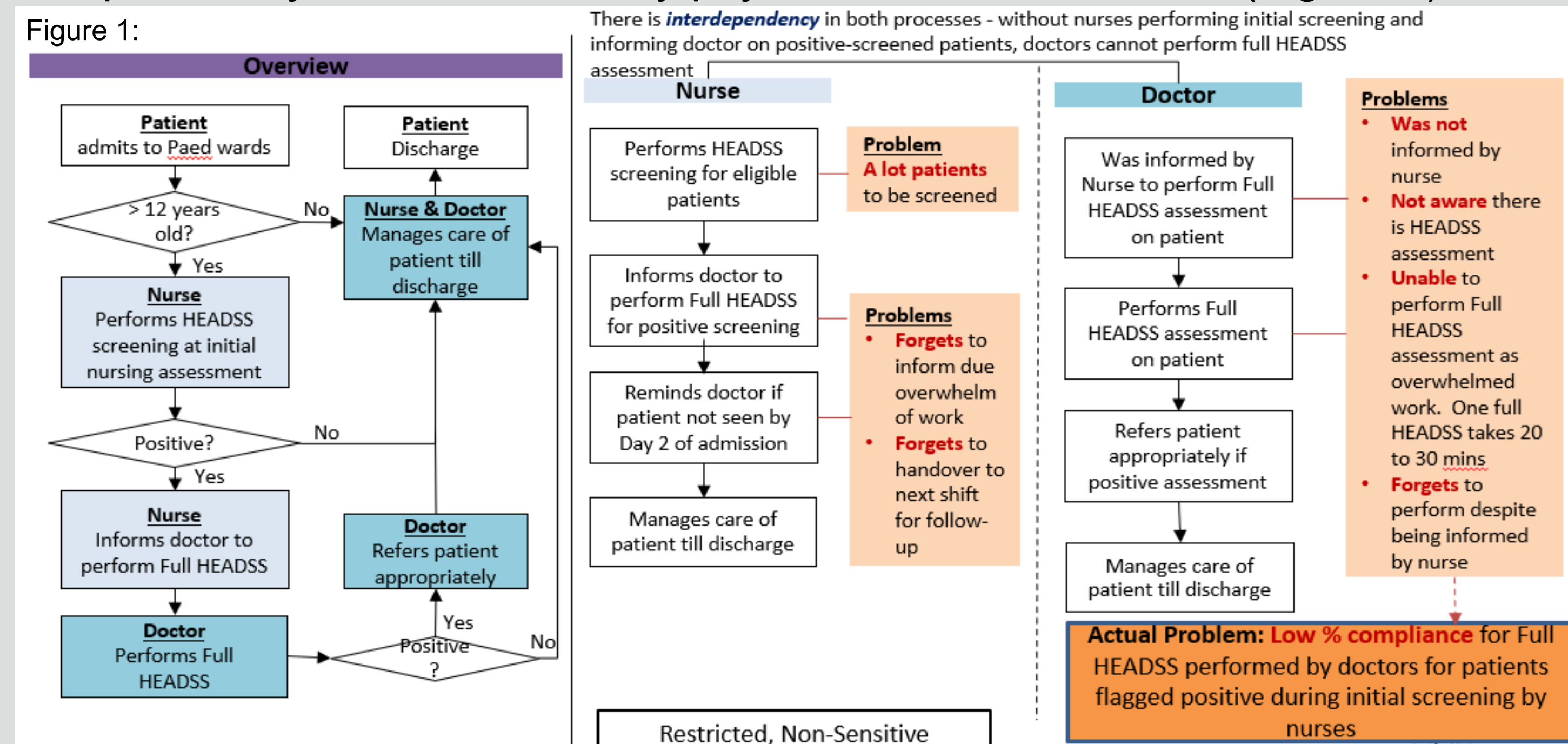
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Introduction

A recent Singapore study found one in three adolescents suffering from mental health symptoms with suicide being the major cause of death. Other important morbidities amongst adolescents include drug and alcohol use, mood disorders, eating disorders, sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancies. HEADSS assessment tool is routinely used amongst 12-18 years old admitted to paediatric wards since 2017 to facilitate communication and screen for important psychosocial risk factors. However, in a hospital-wide assessment conducted in April 2021, we found a gap in administration of HEADSS screening amongst hospitalized adolescents.

Problem and Aim

Adolescents aged 12-18 years old admitted to paediatric general wards that were screened positive through a self-reported HEADSS screening tool were referred to doctors for full HEADSS interview and appropriate interventions or guidance provided to the adolescents and families. While there is good nursing compliance for administering the self-reported HEADSS screening tool, we found poor compliance rate in doctors conducting full HEADSS assessment amongst adolescents who were screened positive. This is of grave concern as these missed positive cases can potentially benefit from early psychosocial interventions (Figure 1).



A multi-disciplinary workgroup was formed to improve % of Compliance for HEADSS assessment performed by doctors on all eligible paediatric inpatients upon positive screening by nurses from 40% to 70% within 6 months in KK Hospital.

Method

A survey administered to 17 doctors and 234 nurses was conducted in April 2022 to understand the root causes for poor compliance. Results of survey found (1) large numbers of patients screened positive requiring nurses to inform doctors to conduct full HEADSS assessment, thus increasing cognitive loads of both nurses and doctors (2) gap in nurses' communication to doctors in those screened positive (3) gap in doctors' medical record documentation on need for full HEADSS assessment if screened positive (4) Long time (20-30 minutes) taken for doctors to complete HEADSS assessment with competing clinical priorities.

A bundled intervention consisting of: 1) Improving clarity of HEADSS screening questions through co-creation with nurses, doctors and adolescents 2) streamlining cases that require HEADSS screening 3) routine documentation of HEADSS screening in doctors' notes 4) developing a targeted HEADSS assessment for those screened positive to reduce doctors' assessment time 5) Improved communication between nurses and doctors on those screened positive requiring HEADSS assessment (Figure 2).

Figure 2 (Snippets of Interventions): Previous HEADSS screening form for nurses

HEADSS Screening

Screening Criteria: * Patient is 12 to 18 years old, single, / NA

Home: ☐ Supportive / ☐ Conflicts with parents/siblings / ☐ Chaotic/fights/arguments with parents/siblings

School: ☐ On track / ☐ Grades dropping / ☐ School absenteeism > 2 days a month / ☐ Grades failing / ☐ Not attending school

Eating: ☐ Eats 3 meals a day / ☐ Skips more than 2 meals a day / ☐ Change in eating habits, or not eating with family/friends or... / ☐ Overeating

Activities & peers: ☐ No change / ☐ Reduced activities / ☐ Peer conflicts / ☐ Completely not doing any activities / ☐ Sudden increase in activities / ☐ School bullying

Drugs / Alcohol: ☐ No / ☐ Sometimes with peers/friends / ☐ Frequently

Suicidal: ☐ Not feeling sad / ☐ Feeling sad sometimes / ☐ Always feeling sad

Sleep: ☐ No problem falling asleep / ☐ Can fall asleep but wake up > 2 times a night / ☐ Not able to fall asleep > 3 times a week / ☐ Sleeps too much

Smoking: ☐ No / ☐ Sometimes with peers/friends / ☐ Frequently

Safety: ☐ Feels safe / ☐ Don't feel safe / ☐ Feels very unsafe

Self-harm / Suicidal tendency: ☐ No thoughts / ☐ Has thoughts of self-harm / ☐ Planning / ☐ Has self-harmed before

Sexuality: ☐ Not in a relationship / ☐ In a relationship / ☐ Was touched and not feeling comfortable about it

HEADSS Assessment: ☐ Not Required / ☐ Require Full HEADSS Assessment

New HEADSS Screening form co-created by Nurses, doctors and patients

Simplified explanation on each field to provide clarity for patients, taking into consideration the sensitivity when attempting the questions

New HEADSS screening form

KK Women's and Children's Hospital

Adolescents Psychosocial Screening (HEADSS) Form

Growing up can be challenging and it is common to have changes in our lives. This questionnaire will help healthcare professionals understand your challenges to better help you. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions.

Even in situations when you or someone else is at risk of getting hurt, everything that you share will be kept private between you and the healthcare professional. If there is a need to share the information to better support you, the healthcare professional will ask your permission first.

Home: How often do you get along with each other? ☐ We get along well / ☐ We have frequent fights or conflicts / ☐ I do not have a regular place to stay.

School: Over the past 3 months, how often have you missed school? ☐ Nearly missed school / ☐ Missed more than 2 weeks / ☐ Skipped attending school.

Eating: Over the past 3 months, were there any changes to your eating habits? ☐ Not at all / ☐ Avoid eating when hungry / ☐ Vomited after most meals / ☐ Lost 5 kg or more.

Activities and peers: Has someone said things or hurt you repeatedly that make you feel unsafe or scared? ☐ Not at all / ☐ Occasional / ☐ Frequent.

Drugs/alcohol: Do you drink alcohol or take drugs for non-medical reasons to feel good? ☐ Not at all / ☐ Occasional / ☐ Frequent.

Suicidal: Over the past 3 months, how often have you been feeling down, depressed or hopeless? ☐ Not at all / ☐ Several days / ☐ Nearly every day.

Sleep: Over the past 3 months, how often have you had trouble falling or staying asleep? ☐ Not at all / ☐ Several days / ☐ Nearly every day.

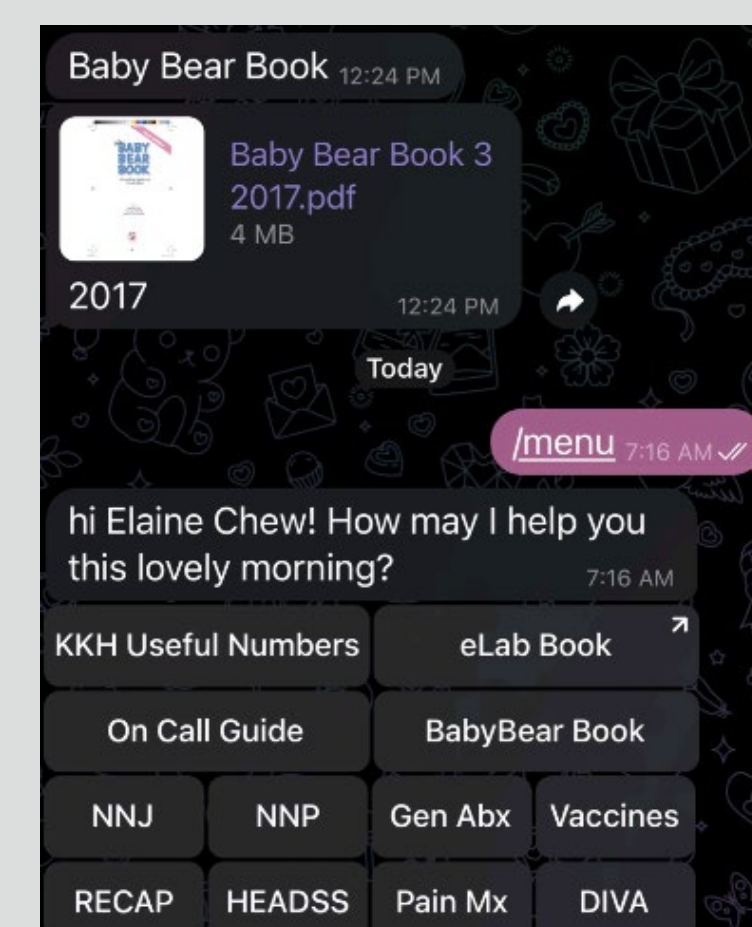
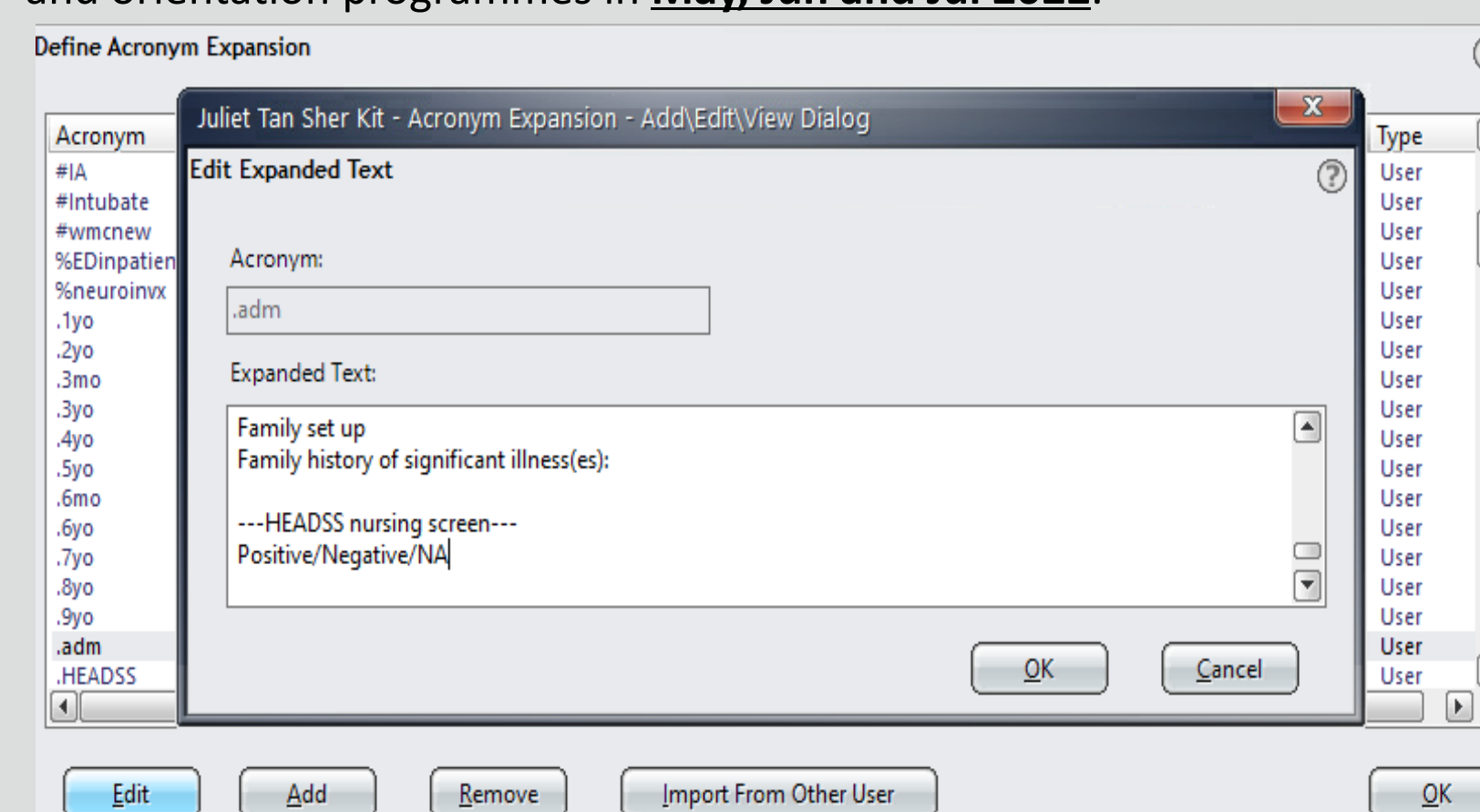
Smoking: How often do you smoke cigarettes or use? ☐ Not at all / ☐ Occasional / ☐ Frequent.

Safety: Do you feel threatened or in danger? ☐ Not at all / ☐ Occasional / ☐ Frequent.

Self-harm (suicidal thoughts): Over the past 3 months, how often have you thought that you would be better off dead or hurting yourself in some way? ☐ Not at all / ☐ Several days / ☐ Nearly every day.

Sexuality: Are you currently in a romantic relationship? ☐ Not at all / ☐ Yes / ☐ Someone touched me in a way that was uncomfortable.

Develop training slides to guide HOs and MOs, that during clerking, team to document HEADSS positive/negative screen in admission document (figure below), and need for full/targeted HEADSS in plans. Slides were communicated to Doctors during department meetings and orientation programmes in [May, Jun and Jul 2022](#).



The inclusion of HEADSS assessment in Baby Bear Chat Bot Telegram in [Jul 2022](#) (picture on left). This is to allow accessibility of information by the doctors if in doubt.

Results

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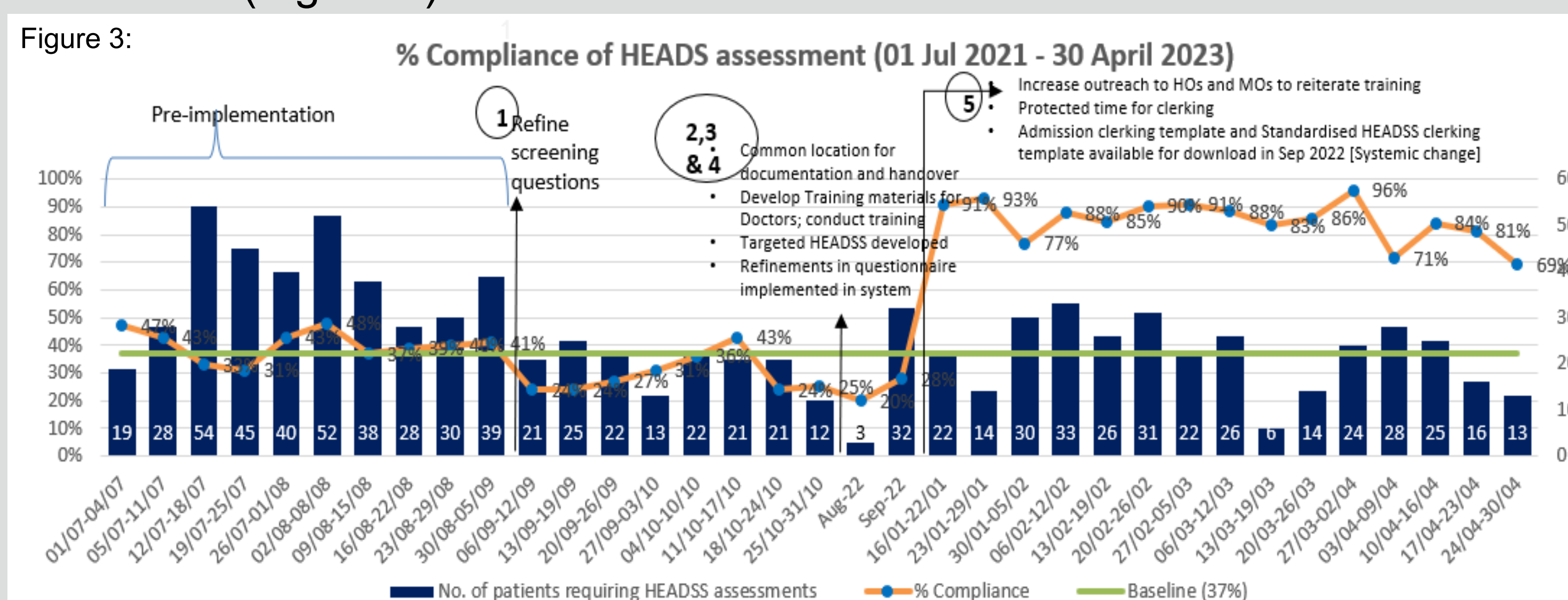


Figure 4:

Duration of data analysed	Average no. of patients referred weekly (positive screened after full/targeted HEADSS performed)	Remarks
Baseline (10 weeks)	6.4 patients	Referral Rate increased to 142%
Post Baseline (15 weeks)	15.5 patients	

For patients with positive HEADSS assessment, 64 percent were referred to mental health providers (24 percent to medical social workers, 14 percent to dietitians, 12 and 8 percent to psychology and psychiatry respectively, 3 and 1 percent to adolescent nursing, CHAMPS and Art therapy respectively). 36 percent were referred to other medical or surgical sub-specialties. Early intervention was necessary to help these patients improve their mental health (Figure 4).

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