Identification of Common Themes from Never Events Data Published by NHS England

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Background:

Never events (NEs) are serious clinical incidents that cause potentially avoidable harm and impose a significant financial burden on healthcare systems. The purpose of this study was to identify common never events.

Methods:

We analysed the NHS England NE data from 2012 to 2020 to identify common never events category and themes.

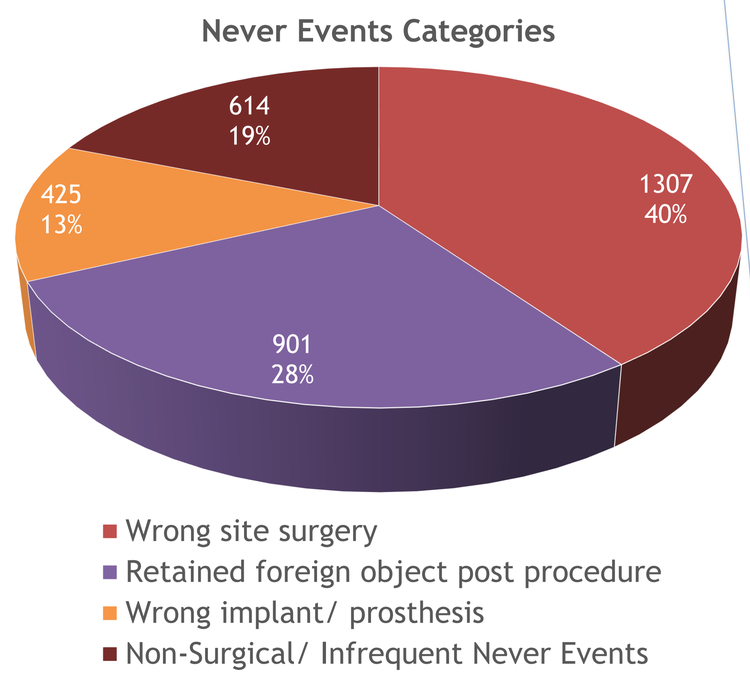

Figure 1. Never Events Main Categories

Results:

- We identified 51 common NE themes in 4 main categories out of a total of 3247 NE reported during this period (Figure 1).
- Wrong-side (laterality) and wrong tooth removal were the most common wrong-site NE accounting for 300 (22.95%) and 263 (20.12%) incidents, respectively.
- There were 197 (15%) wrong-site blocks, 125 (9.56%) wrong procedures, and 96 (7.3%) wrong skin lesions excised.
- Vaginal swabs were the most commonly retained items (276;30.63%) followed by surgical swabs (164;18.20%) and guidewires (152;16.87%). There were 67 (7.44%) incidents of retained parts of instruments and 48 (5.33%) retained instruments.
- Wrong intraocular lenses (165; 38.82%) were the most common wrong implants followed by wrong hip prostheses (n = 94; 22.11%) and wrong knees (n = 91; 21.41%).
- Non-surgical events accounted for 18.9% (n = 614) of the total incidents. Misplaced naso-or oro-gastric tubes (n = 178;29%) and wrong-route administration of medications were the most common events in this category (n = 111;18%), followed by unintentional connection of a patient requiring oxygen to an air flow-meter (n = 93; 15%).

Conclusion:

- This paper identifies common NE categories and themes.
- Awareness of these might help reduce their incidence.

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