A Review of an Epilepsy Nurse Specialist’s Clinical Activity & Association with Paediatric Epilepsy Admissions

K Johnson, C Dunkley
Dept. of Paediatrics, Sherwood Forest Hospitals, Sutton in Ashfield

Introduction
The new post of a Children’s Epilepsy Nurse Specialist (ENS) at Kings Mill Hospital, Sutton in Ashfield, UK was created April 2007. Funding was supported by the Roald Dahl Foundation and Epilepsy Action for the first twelve months. The ENS works as a key member of a multidisciplinary epilepsy service, providing appropriate, accessible services for children with epilepsies, their families, schools and other professionals. We aimed to quantify and characterise clinical activity for the ENS over time and to assess whether the introduction of an ENS is associated with a change in paediatric epilepsy admission rates.

Diary Review
The prospective diary review showed a yearly median of 29 ward visits; 2 Emergency Department visits, 35 home visits; 560 telephone contacts; 15 Buccal Midazolam training sessions and 32 ad-hoc paediatric outpatient reviews. Each year there was a median of 22 multidisciplinary epilepsy clinics; 19 nurse led clinics; 4 paediatric neurology clinics and 71 school visits.

Epilepsy related admissions
Mean admission rates over 3 years before the ENS commenced were 67/100,000 children/year (range 62-72.1). Mean rates over 3 years after ENS commencement were 35.2/100,000 children/year (range 32.3-37.5)

Conclusions
The diary review clearly shows the diversity of the ENS activity and how this has changed over time. Ward visits have reduced coinciding with reduced epilepsy admissions. Outpatient interventions have increased. The number of telephone contacts have more than doubled in the second year, appearing static in years three and four. Educational and supportive visits to the child’s home and school have also increased. Activities of an ENS changes over time towards non-admission and community-based activity.