

FITNESS ASSESSMENT FOR OLDER PATIENTS IN BREAST CLINIC

STAFF INFORMATION LEAFLET

This leaflet explains the fitness assessment form which has been created by the National Audit for Breast Cancer in Older Patients for use by health care professionals in breast clinic.

What is the National Audit of Breast Cancer in Older Patients (NABCOP)?

The National Audit of Breast Cancer in Older Patients was set up to support NHS providers to improve the quality of hospital care for older patients with breast cancer in England and Wales. The audit evaluates the care delivered to women from the point of initial diagnosis to the end of primary and adjuvant treatment, and provides information on comparative performance of NHS breast cancer units for women aged 50 years and over.

More information on NABCOP can be found at www.nabcop.org.uk

What is the fitness assessment form?

NHS staff already routinely assess the fitness of a patient in a variety of ways. However, our 2016/17 organisational survey, presented as part of the NABCOP 2017 Annual Report, highlighted variation in assessment of comorbidity, cognition and functional status. We created the form to be a pragmatic method of standardising fitness assessment for older women whilst not being cumbersome or time consuming to complete. The results of our pilot study looking into the practicality of the form was carried out in 2018 and is available to view in our [2019 Annual Report](#) via the NABCOP website.

What is the objective of the fitness assessment form?

We aimed to develop a consistent and standardised method of fitness assessment for older women in breast clinic. We hope this will identify potential healthcare needs as well as provide a fuller picture of overall patient health.

At what point in the patient journey should it be completed?

The form should be completed on the attendance of an eligible patient to breast clinic for the first time for suspicion of breast cancer. This will allow the form to be referred to in any multi-disciplinary team (MDT) discussions where information on cognition and frailty can influence treatment decisions.

Patient eligibility

Patients are eligible for a fitness form to be completed if they are:

- aged 70 years or older,
- attending a breast clinic for the first time for suspicion of breast cancer (e.g. prior to any breast cancer diagnosis).

What is on the assessment form?

The form was designed in conjunction with geriatricians, breast surgeons, anaesthetists and oncologists to be a concise and simple adjunct to a breast consultation. There are three sections:

1. The Clinical Frailty Scale, a common tool to screen for frailty where a patient is scored from 1 (very fit) to 9 (terminally ill, life expectancy <3 months). The judgement may be informed by one or more tests and routine clinical assessment.
2. The Abbreviated Mental Test Score (AMTS). This is a short series of questions for you to ask the patient to measure their cognitive ability. The AMTS is a validated instrument that has been used in various patient groups, but is not routinely used in breast cancer care. This can be omitted where the patient has a known diagnosis of dementia and the corresponding question at the top of the form is completed to reflect this.
3. Three 'yes/no' questions about whether a patient has other major diseases e.g. cardio-respiratory disease.

What happens if the assessment picks up a problem?

If the assessment identifies a patient who you think may benefit by further investigation or support, then we recommend following national guidelines and your local hospital policy. If you would like further information on resources of frailty in older patients:

1. Macmillan have created a [document](#) filled with information and training resources to help health care professionals who care for older people.
2. The British Geriatrics Society (BGS) have compiled a '[Fit for Frailty](#)' report which contains best practice guidelines on managing frail patients in both the in-patient and out-patient setting.

How long does the form take to complete?

The form will typically **take less than 5 minutes** to complete and we suggest completed forms should be available for the initial multi-disciplinary discussion and filed in the patient's medical records.

What happens to the results of the assessment?

In order to understand the reasoning behind some variations in assessment of older patients across the UK, we would like to capture data from as many NHS organisations as possible. The collaboration of breast units around the UK and feedback obtained will allow the NABCOP to evaluate these aspects of patient care more successfully. The components within the form require return by NHS organisations in England as part of the new Cancer

Outcomes and Services Dataset (COSD) Version 9 (implemented from July 2020). For more information about the COSD update please refer to the website for [National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service](#) (NCRAS).

Questions or feedback

We are grateful for your support and we are continuing to evaluate the practicality and utility of this assessment form. Please contact the project team at nabcop@rcseng.ac.uk or on 020 7869 6139 with any feedback or questions you may have.

Alternatively, we are collecting feedback using an online survey which can be accessed using the below link:

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/fitness_proforma_evaluation

Thank you in advance for your participation.