

P5

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS' PERCEPTION OF FLUID INTAKE IN RELATION TO CUP SIZE

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Background:

Healthcare Professionals (HCPs) working in the field of continence and urology, will often advise a patient about fluid intake. Many will use measures like drink '6-7 cups of fluid' rather than stating to 'drink 2 litres' a day. When doing this, they will often observe the cup that the patient uses, and make an estimate about how much fluid this cup will hold, and give advice accordingly. Whilst in a Community of Practice meeting, it became evident, that some HCPs estimated cup size differently. We therefore undertook an audit of colleagues' ability to estimate cup volumes. Similar work has been undertaken in midwifery assessing the ability to estimate blood loss following delivery (Bose et al, 2006).

Method:

6 HCPs working across South London audited their colleagues' (nurses, AHPs and medical staff) ability to estimate the volume of fluid in three different cups (provided, and marked to a set fill volume). The HCPs were blind to the cup volume. The known volumes were 120 ml, 200 ml and 300ml.

Results:

90 sets of data were obtained for each cup – giving 270 estimations of cup size. The percentage error was calculated for each cup.

211 of the 270 (78%) estimations were accurate within 25% of the known volume, least errors were seen in the 200ml cup.

Discussion:

The results demonstrate that the majority of HCPs advising on fluid intake, have the ability to estimate fluid volume with an acceptable accuracy, however there are some individuals who are very poor. Our advice would be to assess your own ability prior to using this technique with patients, and to use accurate measuring devices wherever this is possible.

Reference

Bose P, Regan F, Paterson-Brown S. Improving accuracy of estimated blood loss at obstetric haemorrhage using clinical reconstructions. BJOG. 2006; 113(8): 919-24

