

# AB134. SOH22ABS021. A snapshot review of the quality of urology outpatient letters reveals rooms for improvement

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**Background:** Effective and efficient communication is crucial in healthcare. Written communication remains the most prevalent form of communication between specialised and primary care. The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC), UK “Standards for the Clinical Structure and Content of Patient Records”, published in 2013, were adopted by the Professional Record Standards Body (PRSB). By October 2018 all letters should incorporate PRSB headings. Aim was to assess compliance with existing guidelines in writing outpatient letters.

**Methods:** This was a retrospective study on the quality of the urology outpatient letters in a tertiary care university teaching hospital. Data were collected from randomly selected clinic letters between June and July 2021. Letters were analysed against the standard. Data were cross checked between two independent reviewers.

**Results:** A total of 31 letters were reviewed. Only 13% of the letters were organized and revealed adequate relevant information. Nineteen percent of the letters documented the background history, medications and allergy. Symptoms and signs were documented in 74% of the letters. Seventy percent of the clinic letters mentioned part or all of the investigations. All the letters included the current clinical issue, plan and distribution lists.

**Conclusions:** Our study showed wide variation in the quality of outpatient letters. There is certainly room for significant improvement of content of written communication to improve overall quality of patient care. Communication between caregivers should feature more prominently in graduate and postgraduate medical teaching and training.

**Keywords:** Healthcare; communication; outpatient letters; quality of patient care; medical teaching and training

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## Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

*Ethical Statement:* The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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