Antineoplastic: Anticipated preparations or longer opening hours?

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Background

Our centralized Chemotherapy Preparation Unit is only opened in the morning (5 days a week). Our annual production is 11,000 preparations for 4 different care units. Currently, the chemotherapy infusion of the afternoon patients are prepared in the morning (even if the active substance is expensive) and discarded if the administration is cancelled. To rationalize costs, the unit is considering the option of opening all day long.

Purpose

This study aims to estimate the profitability of an opening of the unit in the afternoon compared with the loss related to the cancellations of the preparations produced in the morning for the afternoon.

Material & Method

1. We have recorded over 3 months...

2. We have listed the causes of cancellations and classified them in 2 categories
   - Predictable
   - Unpredictable

3. We have estimated the cost of a wider opening**
   (to make the preparations for the afternoon in the afternoon)
   - The average number of preparations planned in the afternoon over the period
   - The staff's hourly rate (1 pharmacist and 2 pharmacy technicians)
   - The number of work days over the period

4. We have compared the cost of discarded preparations for the afternoon
   - Active substance + packaging
   - Salary of the additional staff (1 pharmacist + 2 pharmacy technicians)

Results

1. The preparations over the period

2. The causes of cancellations
   - 42% unpredictable
   - 58% predictable

3. The cost of a wider opening
   - Average number of preparations for the afternoon: 4.8
   - Staff cost per day: €95,4
   - Number of work days over the period: 68
   - Total: €6,712

4. The comparison of costs
   - Cost 1: €1,674
   - Cost 2: €6,712
   - Cost 1 < Cost 2

Discussion

The cost of an all day opening is high because of a staff requirement. Currently, it does not seem appropriate to extend opening hours. A return of the results of the study to the care units is planned to raise awareness on predictable cancellations.