



AB172. 80. The impact of the physician associate on managing surgical waiting lists

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Background: Surgical waiting lists are a major problem in Ireland. The clinical impact of using non-consultant hospital doctor (NCHD) clinicians in managing waiting lists has not been established. Physician associates (PAs) aid in the diagnosis and management of patients. As a permanent member of the team they can provide continuity to a service. The aim of this project was to determine the impact of a PA on managing a general surgical waiting list.

Methods: A retrospective snapshot audit was completed comparing waiting lists for a single general surgical service.

Waiting lists for a number of times points pre- and post-introduction of a PA were compared. Total waiting times and the proportion of 'long waiters' (greater than 12 months on a waiting list) were compared.

Results: Overall, there was a 32.5% reduction in numbers on the waiting list in the 6 months following the appointment of the PA. The same period in the previous year showed a 10% reduction. Prior to the appointment of a PA, the proportion of long waiters was static at 23%. In the study period, the proportion of long waiters was reduced to 5% ($P=0.001$). Surgical access was similar in the periods studied.

Conclusions: A PA is of use in actively managing surgical waiting lists. This study supports the introduction of PAs onto surgical services to help reduce waiting times leading to improved patient care.

Keywords: Physician; associates; waiting times

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