

AB031. SOH21AS144. Elective surgery in a pandemic—is it safe to operate in a designated COVID-19 hospital?

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Background: The global pandemic has resulted in mass cancellation of elective operations; impacting cancer procedures, waiting times and training opportunities. In the Southern Trust, Craigavon Area Hospital is the designated COVID-19 site and Daisy Hill Hospital the non-COVID-19 site. Therefore, the aim was to assess if systems introduced resulted in low post-operative COVID-19 cases in a COVID-19 site compared to a non-COVID-19 site.

Methods: A prospective audit of elective surgeries performed on COVID-19 site from May–July and non-COVID-19 site April–June 2020. Data was collected using standardised audit proforma with a 30 day follow up. Measures introduced included the use of personal protective equipment, a separate clean ward, routine staff and patient testing, 7-day patient self-isolation prior to surgery and a no visiting policy.

Results: 44 elective operations performed in COVID-19 site and 21 in non-COVID-19 site. About 2.3% (1/44) developed clinical COVID-19 6 days post-op on COVID-19 site—did not require intensive care unit admission and were alive at 30 days. Zero COVID-19 cases in non-COVID-19 site and zero staff cases across both sites.

Conclusions: Precautionary methods introduced may have contributed to low numbers of post-operative COVID-19

cases on the COVID-19 site. The methods introduced were enough to enable elective operations to recommence on the COVID-19 site, allowing training opportunities to continue. In light of recent rising community COVID-19 cases, a re-audit is being conducted using the same methods. This will increase sample size and therefore significance of results.

Keywords: General surgery; elective surgery; training opportunities; COVID-19; post-operative

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Footnote

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