

AB096. SOH21AS199. Joint replacement surgery waiting times in a major tertiary referral centre: perceptions and expectations

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Background: Information regarding the exact waiting time for an elective joint arthroplasty (total hip and knee replacement) is not widely available in Ireland. In particular, the waiting time from general practitioner (GP) referral to being seen by orthopaedic consultant in relation to joint arthroplasty and time from booking of elective joint arthroplasty to day of surgery.

Methods: A questionnaire designed in collaboration with an experienced arthroplasty consultant, multiple senior non-hospital consultant doctors (NCHDs) and nurses were answered by 20 consultants, 20 NCHDs, 20 members orthopaedic nurses, 20 GPs and 20 patients. The questionnaire included the perception of what the actual waiting times are, and what is a reasonable waiting time. Factors affecting waiting and operating times, perception of length of stay post-op, the influence of family on the length of stay, discharge to step down facilities or home, and provision of post-op support were recorded.

Results: Firstly, there is a large discrepancy between actual and expected waiting times for joint arthroplasty in all groups questioned. The group whose perceived appointment waiting times were least are the patients themselves (12.6 months). The patients group also had the lowest perceived times from booking to surgery (12.5 months). Four of five groups noted that access to theatre was a major factor. The average length of stay

post-joint arthroplasty was almost universal among all five groups, with an average of 4.5 days. The vast majority of respondents thought that early discharge within 5 days (82%) and family support led to better outcomes (98%).

Conclusions: The general perception in patients towards waiting time for an orthopaedic appointment and for joint replacement surgery is much longer than the recommended waiting time of 6 months. Continuous efforts to minimise waiting times and improve patient satisfaction in the public healthcare system is necessary.

Keywords: Expectations; hip; knee; joint replacement; perceptions; waiting time

Acknowledgments

Funding: None.

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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doi: 10.21037/map-21-ab096

Cite this abstract as: Low LYH, Carmody O, Devitt A. Joint replacement surgery waiting times in a major tertiary referral centre: perceptions and expectations. *Mesentery Peritoneum* 2021;5:AB096.