

AB098. SOH21AS169. Upscaling virtual fracture clinic use is a safe, effective measure in the delivery of trauma care

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Background: The virtual fracture clinic (VFC) has proved beneficial in reducing footfall within the hospital setting, improving the cost of running a trauma service, whilst satisfying the vast majority of referred patients. The mandatory upscaling of telemedicine use, specifically the enhancement of the VFC, amidst the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, was analysed.

Methods: The remit of the VFC within our hospital has been expanded so as to include all referred ambulatory trauma. Outcomes of our VFC review over the six-week period following the introduction of the national Irish COVID-19 related restrictions were gathered. These outcomes were analysed and compared to the corresponding six-week period from 2019.

Results: A 77.2% increase in the VFC referral volume was observed throughout the COVID-19 related time period. Patients were directly discharged in 55.2% of cases in 2020, as opposed to 47.8% in 2019 ($P=0.044$); referred directly for physiotherapy in 32.9% of cases in 2020, as opposed to 28.9% in 2019 ($P=0.173$); and referred to a fracture clinic in 11.9% of cases in 2020, as opposed to 23.7% in 2019 ($P<0.001$). Three percent of patients returned to the clinic post discharge in 2020, compared to 4.4% in 2019 ($P=0.237$). 4.5% of patients were referred for surgery in

2020, as opposed to 2.2% in 2019 ($P=0.105$).

Conclusions: The VFC proved to be an efficient tool in managing ambulatory trauma throughout the pandemic. Upscaling the VFC to include all ambulatory trauma is a safe, effective method in reducing clinic attendances and hospital footfall, whilst ensuring high care standards are maintained.

Keywords: Virtual fracture clinic (VFC); practice management; service provision; quality improvement; fracture clinic; coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

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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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