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## EVALUATION OF A NEW PAEDIATRIC PREASSESSMENT SERVICE IN A TERTIARY CENTRE

*M. Patel, S. Shah, E. O'Donohoe, E. Monahan*

*St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, London, UK*

### **Background/Context**

The APAGBI best practice guidance (1) states that all children should be preassessed prior to the day of surgery. This practice helps to assess comorbidities and emotional needs, and aids with the process of informed consent.

A paediatric preassessment service was developed in 2021 at St George's Hospital (SGH), a paediatric tertiary referral centre in London. Parents were surveyed about the preoperative information given to them after one year of service implementation.

### **Problem**

Before 2021, a paediatric preassessment service was not established at our centre. Furthermore, no feedback regarding parent and child experiences preoperatively had been collected.

### **Strategy for change**

Parents and children were surveyed in February 2021 to assess what information had been received about the child's anaesthetic preoperatively. The willingness to engage in electronic preassessment was also assessed. Our service was subsequently expanded to incorporate Ultramed "MyPreOp Kids" electronic preassessment, consultant session expansion and appointment of a dedicated paediatric preassessment nurse.

In October 2022, information provision following the change was re-audited. This was specific to children requiring anaesthesia for Magnetic Resonance Imaging, endoscopy and orthopaedic surgery, as these services were initially targeted during the service expansion.

### **Measure of improvement**

The initial survey returned 54 results:

- No parents received information regarding their child's anaesthetic
- 43 (80%) responders stated a preference for more information regarding anaesthesia
- All responders were willing to engage in electronic preoperative assessment
- Mean self-reported preoperative anxiety was 2.6/5 amongst parents and 1.8/5 for children

The re-evaluation returned 47 results:

- 30 responders (64%) received information regarding their child's anaesthetic; 90% of whom found the information useful
- 26 responders (55%) had used Ultramed 'MyPreOp Kids'
- Mean self-reported preoperative anxiety was 3.1/5 amongst parents and 2.8/5 for children

### **Lessons learnt**

A service incorporating electronic preassessment has been introduced at our centre. In one year there have been improvements in preoperative information provision, and positive feedback regarding the utility of this information. Mean patient and parental anxiety scores have not improved, and this will be investigated further as the service expands across all paediatric subspecialties. Further planned changes include the provision of age-appropriate information to children, incorporating a locally designed video specific to SGH, the recent RCoA 'Beano' comic (2) and the 'Little Journey' mobile application (3). The impact of these interventions on preoperative anxiety will be assessed.

### **Message for others**

Initiating paediatric preassessment services as per APAGBI best practice guidance is challenging but achievable. Regular review of service changes is necessary to ensure information given to patients and parents remains appropriate, of utility and reduces preoperative anxiety. Tangible short-term service improvements include electronic preassessment, nurse and anaesthetist-led clinics and patient information.

### **References**

1. Courtman et al. Best Practice Guidance: Preassessment Services for Children undergoing Surgery or Procedures. 2022. Available from: [https://www.apagbi.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-05/Best%20Practice\\_Preassessment%20standards%20in%20Children%20%202022%20-%20Published.pdf](https://www.apagbi.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-05/Best%20Practice_Preassessment%20standards%20in%20Children%20%202022%20-%20Published.pdf) Date accessed: 2 Feb 2023
2. Royal college of anaesthetists. "Dennis has an anaesthetic!". 2023. Available from: <https://www.rcoa.ac.uk/patient-information/patient-information-resources/children-parents-carers/dennis-has-anaesthetic> Date accessed: 4 Feb 2023 3. <https://www.littlejourney.health/patients>. Date accessed 6 Feb 2023.