

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Quality & Patient Safety Conference

### Improving the Healthcare Journey for Patients & Staff



#### TITLE

**Referrals of abnormal head shapes accompanied by photographs: A quality improvement project at the National Paediatric Craniofacial Centre**

#### SUBMITTED BY

**Noelle O'Mahony, Craniofacial Clinical Services Coordinator,  
Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street**

#### ABSTRACT

##### INTRODUCTION

Despite a standardised referral form and other educational interventions we continue to see inconsistent referral information and increasing numbers of children presenting with normal head shapes that do not require craniofacial expert care. These comprise of our largest number of referrals in any one year. We have previously encouraged the submission of photographs of children's head and face to accompany referrals for "head shapes" to reduce the amount of unnecessary radiological investigations.

##### METHODOLOGY

PDSA Model. Problem identified, plan made to implement, PDSA cycle continued, review.

##### AIM

1. To ensure all referrals of abnormal head shape include photographs of the child's head shape.
2. To reduce the number of children with normal head shapes reviewed at clinic.

##### CHANGE IMPLEMENTED

All referrals for "head shapes" must be accompanied by photographs and completed on a standardised referral form. The referral is then reviewed by the Lead Clinician, following which it is either accepted or rejected.

##### MEASUREMENT

Number of referrals accepted, rejected and the clinical outcome if offered an appointment. If re-referred, an appointment is offered, clinical outcome noted.

##### RESULTS

A follow up audit was then completed to establish if there was any.

1. 105 patient referrals rejected during the 12 month period.
2. 2.67% reduction in the wait time for a new patient clinic appointment from 24 to 8 weeks for the patients triaged as requiring a soon or routine clinic review.
3. 3.38% (n=4) patients were subsequently re-referred and reviewed at clinic with no change to their clinical diagnosis from the original rejection of the referral.

##### VALUE

Reduction in wait time for a new patient clinic appointment & cost saving. Quicker access to expert Craniofacial opinion by sending photos with the referral, response letter sent asap to referrer if no concerns stating no review required at the NPCC. Improved triage process, role enhancement for CNS - double triage.

##### SUSTAINMENT

Yes, we continue to only accept referrals with photos and we have extended the project to develop an online electronic referral form, we have introduced a double triage process to ensure accuracy when triaging referrals and looking at photographs.

##### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Other specialties may also benefit from photographs accompanying their referral to provide that visual information.