



3rd Annual Quality & Patient Safety Conference Improving the Healthcare Journey for Patients & Staff



TITLE

Impact on routine non contrast spinal MRI requests with improved access to the national neurosurgical service

SUBMITTED BY

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

The department of neurosurgery in Beaumont Hospital receives 5,000 outpatient referrals annually. Over the last four years, an outpatient service redesign has delivered significant and sustained improvement in access to the neurosurgical outpatient clinics. Contemporaneous imaging is a critical tool in surgical clinical decision making. The majority of neurosurgical outpatients will have had imaging on referral. When patients have long wait times, repeat imaging is often required in advance of surgical decision making or assisting with ongoing management of the patient. This results in increased demand on Beaumont radiology services to provide up to date imaging requirement.

METHODOLOGY

Improvements were delivered using PDSA cycles, root cause analysis and a robust measurement plan.

AIM

To deliver a maximum patient wait time of 6months for neurosurgical outpatient consultation following referral and investigate the impact of improved access on referral rates for spinal MRI's from clinic.

CHANGE IMPLEMENTED

Resourced the expansion of the physiotherapy led spinal assessment clinics to increase capacity for low complexity spinal referrals, development of subspecialty teams, development and implementation of spinal referral guidelines and re-design of the dear doctor pathway.

MEASUREMENT

Wait time metrics were extracted from the active waiting list, the PTL and OPD summary reports and from NIMIS on the number of outpatient spinal MRI's requested by neurosurgery

RESULTS

- In July 2018 the median wait-time was 220days (range 1-1025) with 1206 waiting 6 months .
- In December 2021, the median wait time had improved to 63 days (range1-271) with 36 patients waiting 6 months
- Neurosurgical outpatient MRI spine request showed a 20% reduction despite an 11% increase in NP seen.
- In the physiotherapy led spinal assessment clinics, there was a 30 % increase in NP activity with a 57% reduction in referrals for MRI.

VALUE

Sustained improvement in access to the neurosurgical outpatients has significantly reduced the utilisation of Beaumont radiology resources despite a significant increase in the volume of NP seen in the service.

SUSTAINMENT

The department of neurosurgery has delivered a sustained improved in access over a four year period. Consistent efforts to maintain this improved access are essential to maintain the reduction in demand for routine spinal MRI which has been achieved.