Development of an urgent general surgical list in a tertiary referral and trauma centre: A quality improvement initiative to improve flow and reduce inpatient bed days.

Dr Rebecca Jones Aintree University Hospital, UK
Dr Gemma Mullen Aintree University Hospital UK

Statement of Problem: In 2014 the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommended that anyone presenting with acute cholecystitis should have a cholecystectomy within one week of diagnosis. An audit of 23000 cases completed on the NCEPOD theatre list at Aintree University Hospital demonstrated that patients listed for cases deemed ‘non-emergency’ such as laparoscopic cholecystectomies were being delayed due to clinical priority. Those delayed by three days from date of booking stayed in hospital 72% longer than those done on day one. Methodology: A business case was presented for the introduction of an urgent general surgical list (UGSL) in which patients who presented to hospital and required ‘non-emergency’ surgery could be listed and if clinically appropriate discharged home to return for day-case surgery. A further audit of this list over six months would be completed to assess its efficiency and whether its introduction allowed a decrease in inpatient bed stay and therefore increased flow. Findings: During this six month period 105 cases were completed with an average theatre utilisation of 79%. Of these 38 patients had no inpatient stay whatsoever during the course of their initial presentation to hospital and surgery. Average inpatient bed days across the entire process was reduced by 57% with a potential saving over a year of 312 inpatient bed days (42%). A secondary outcome was a reduction in waiting time from booking to surgery for emergency laparotomies of 36%. Conclusion: Creation of a UGSL list in a tertiary referral and trauma centre has been successful at decreasing the number of inpatient bed days in patients requiring ‘non-emergency’ surgery and has improved patient flow by decreasing inpatient bed days and decreasing delays in waiting for surgery. It has also improved waiting times for emergency surgery on the NCEPOD list.



Dr Rebecca Jones is an anaesthetic trainee within the North West Deanery. She has an interest in peri-operative care particularly for patients requiring non-elective surgery and quality improvement.

ra.jones@doctors.org.uk