

Gynaecology waiting list: Hidden referrals and how the waiting list varies by geography

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

January 2022

This document sets out methodology used in the analysis provided to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) in January 2022.

Summary of approach

Publicly available data for NHS Waiting lists, admissions to patient care (APC) and outpatient appointments (OPA) was collated and analysed to understand how waiting lists and admissions to care have varied over time and by geography.

Current waiting list data by speciality was analysed nationally for all devolved nations. Further analysis of England's current waiting list and hidden referrals by speciality was analysed at Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and regional national level. Where CCG data was required to obtain regional figures this was aggregated and weighted by population. Due to data availability a similar analysis was not possible for other devolved nations.

Admission data for England was analysed to understand how admissions and outpatient appointments for specific conditions have varied over time, and how admission types (e.g. day case, emergency admissions) have varied over time.

Current waiting list

Waiting list for each country was collated from a variety of sources as set out in Table 1. Where possible the data and methodology used was consistent with that of the [LCP Waiting List Tracker](#). The methodology used for the waiting list tracker can be found [here](#). Any methodological variations due to data availability are set out in Table 1. The methods used for data not used within the waiting list tracker, where possible, are consistent with those of the waiting list tracker.

Table 1: List NHS waiting list data used in this analysis

Data geography	Source	Comment
England	NHS England	Data relating to Gynaecology waiting lists analysed at a national and CCG level
Scotland	Public Health Scotland	Ongoing waits for Gynaecology waiting lists analysed at national level, where available further analysis was carried out analysing by type of referral (inpatient or outpatient)
Wales	Stats Wales	Ongoing waits for Gynaecology waiting lists analysed at a national level
Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Department of Health	Ongoing waits for Gynaecology waiting lists analysed at national level, where available further analysis was carried out analysing by type of referral (inpatient or outpatient, where inpatient relates to both inpatient and day case referrals)

Hidden referrals

In this analysis, hidden need has been estimated by comparing the difference between monthly referrals to treatment (RTTs) in the year prior to the pandemic (three-month rolling average from February 2019 to February 2020) to the monthly RTTs during the pandemic (March 2020 – present). The difference is used to estimate the number of referrals who have not come forward for treatment, the hidden need. Hidden need was assumed to be zero prior to the pandemic, hence our estimate is excess hidden need since the pandemic began. It should be noted that, within the hidden need, a small proportion of these people may never enter the NHS system due to, for example, death, or seeking alternative private healthcare. For this analysis, the proportion that do not ever enter the NHS for their given health needs is assumed to be negligible.

Admission data by diagnosis and admission type

[Hospital Admitted Patient Care](#) (APC) Activity and [Hospital Outpatient activity](#) data published by NHS England on an annual basis was used to analyse how hospital activity by diagnosis code has varied over time. The ICD-10 codes of interest were provided by RCOG (Rosie Walworth) (see Appendix). A time series analysis was carried out on the codes of interest to identify how admission patterns had changed over the past 3 years prior to, during and since the pandemic. An additional time series analysis was carried out on the types of admission (Day cases, emergency admissions and planned overnight admissions ‘ordinary admissions’).

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Appendix 1 – ICD-10 codes and groupings

Code	Code description	Description	Grouping
N84.1	Polyp of cervix uteri	Cervical polyps	Genital polyps
N84.0	Polyp of corpus uteri	Uterine polyp / endometrial polyp	Genital polyps
n39.3	Stress incontinence	Incontinence (urogynaecology)	Incontinence
n39.4	Other specified urinary incontinence	Incontinence (urogynaecology)	Incontinence
n95.0	Postmenopausal bleeding	Post-menopausal bleeding	Menopause
N95.1	Menopausal and female climacteric states	Menopause symptoms	Menopause
E28.3	Primary ovarian failure	Premature menopause	Menopause
N92.5	Other specified irregular menstruation	Irregular periods	Menstrual health
N92.3	Ovulation bleeding	Ovulation bleeding	Menstrual health
N92.0	Excessive and frequent menstruation with regular cycle	Heavy periods (regular)	Menstrual health
N92.1	Excessive and frequent menstruation with irregular cycle	Heavy periods (irregular)	Menstrual health
N90.8	Other specified abnormal uterine and vaginal bleeding	Other forms of irregular bleeding	Menstrual health
n94.6	Dysmenorrhoea, unspecified	Painful periods/menstrual cramps	Menstrual health
N92.6	Irregular menstruation, unspecified	Irregular periods	Menstrual health
N93.0	Postcoital and contact bleeding	Pain and/or bleeding after sex	Menstrual health
N93.8	Other specified abnormal uterine and vaginal bleeding	Other forms of irregular bleeding	Menstrual health
N93.9	Abnormal uterine and vaginal bleeding, unspecified	Other forms of irregular bleeding	Menstrual health
N92.6	Irregular menstruation	Period health	Menstrual health

Code	Code description	Description	Grouping
N93.8	Other specified abnormal uterine and vaginal bleeding	Abnormal vaginal bleeding	Menstrual health
N93.9	Abnormal uterine and vaginal bleeding, unspecified	Abnormal vaginal bleeding	Menstrual health
N91.0	Primary amenorrhoea	Absent periods (you have not started your period by age 15)	Menstrual health
N91.1	Secondary amenorrhoea	Absent periods (you have had periods before, but you have stopped menstruating for three months or longer)	Menstrual health
N91.2	Amenorrhoea, unspecified	Absent periods	Menstrual health
E28.2	Polycystic ovarian syndrome	Polycystic ovarian syndrome	Menstrual health
N90.8	Other specified noninflammatory disorders of vulva and perineum	Unspecified vulval/perineum condition	Other
N94.8	Other specified conditions associated with female genital organs and menstrual cycle	Unspecified gynaecological condition	Other
N83.20	Other and unspecified ovarian cysts	Ovarian cyst	Ovarian cyst
N80.0	Endometriosis of uterus	Endometriosis	Pelvic pain, including endometriosis
N80.9	Endometriosis, unspecified	Endometriosis	Pelvic pain, including endometriosis
N94.1	Dyspareunia		Pelvic pain, including endometriosis
N94.0*	Mittelschmerz		Pelvic pain, including endometriosis
N80.1	Endometriosis of ovary	Endometriosis of ovary	Pelvic pain, including endometriosis
N80.2	Endometriosis of fallopian tube	Endometriosis of fallopian tube	Pelvic pain, including endometriosis
N80.3	Endometriosis of pelvic peritoneum	Endometriosis of pelvic lining	Pelvic pain, including endometriosis
N80.4	Endometriosis of rectovaginal septum and vagina	Endometriosis of between vagina and bowel	Pelvic pain, including endometriosis
N80.5	Endometriosis of intestine	Endometriosis of intestine	Pelvic pain, including endometriosis

Code	Code description	Description	Grouping
N81.8	Other female genital prolapse	Prolapse, other	Prolapse
N81.9	Female genital prolapse, unspecified	Prolapse, other	Prolapse
N81.10	Cystocele	Prolapsed vagina (front wall)	Prolapse
N81.2	Incomplete uterovaginal prolapse	Prolapsed uterus and vagina	Prolapse
N81.3	Complete uterovaginal prolapse	Total Prolapse of uterus/vagina	Prolapse
N81.4	Uterovaginal prolapse, unspecified	Prolapsed uterus/vagina	Prolapse
N81.5	Vaginal enterocele	Prolapse of top of vagina	Prolapse
N81.6	Rectocele	Prolapsed vagina (back wall)	Prolapse
N96.X	Habitual aborter	Recurrent miscarriage	Recurrent miscarriage
N39.0	Urinary tract infection, site not specified	Urinary tract infection	Urinary tract infection
D25.9	Leiomyoma of uterus	Uterine fibroids	Uterine fibroids
D25.0	Submucous leiomyoma of uterus	Fibroids	Uterine fibroids
D25.1	Intramural leiomyoma of uterus	Fibroids	Uterine fibroids
D25.2	Subserosal leiomyoma of uterus	Fibroids	Uterine fibroids
L90.0	Lichen sclerosus et atrophicus	Dermatological condition	Lichen Sclerosus

* Codes used for admitted and outpatient care, N94.1 was given as Mittelschmerz and was manually changed to Dyspareunia and Mittelschmerz was set to N94.0 as the data showed