

Digital follow-up of high-volume low complexity general surgical patients is safe, acceptable to patients and saves resources (0-29 Day Reattendance to STU). A 1-year pilot study.

Picker Experience Network (PEN) Awards 2025

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- Simon Parsons
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- James Short
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- *Acknowledgements:*
- *Grace Handley (Service General Manger)*
- *Michelle Roden (Upper Gi and Endocrine Deputy Service Manager)*
- *Leanne Maycock (RODP Dip/He, Surgical Care Practitioner Upper Gastrointestinal and General Surgery)*
- *Hannah McConkey (Senior Technical Programme Manager)*

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Conflicts

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| • Jody Carvell | None |
| • Simon Parsons | EIDO Healthcare |
| • James Short | None |



Introduction



Patients having high volume, low complexity (HVLC) general surgical procedures often do not have follow-up or have telephone follow-up appointments.



A significant number of these patients also represent to emergency services and attended surgical triage units (STU).



Reattendance rates for those patients at Nottingham University Hospitals (STU) for 2023 (8.6%) and 2024 (15.3%)

Objective

- To assess the value of digital follow up on identifying post operative complications, reattendance rates and patient satisfaction for follow-up of HVLC general surgical patients.

The Method

Patients undergoing laparoscopic cholecystectomy, hernia repair or anti reflux surgery in 2024. Were invited to take part in the pilot study.

A text message at discharge containing postoperative information produced by EIDO Healthcare® and invitation to the ISLA® digital follow-up platform.

After consenting, patients were asked to submit a questionnaire at 7 days postoperatively along with photographs of their wounds.

Submissions were reviewed by surgical care practitioners (SCP) with advice available from a consultant and patients were either discharged, asked to submit another questionnaire in a further 7 days, required a telephone consultation or outpatient appointment for physical review.

After discharge, they were asked to complete an anonymous patient satisfaction survey.

Questionnaire Progress Submissions

Discharged

Continued review through platform

Gallstones: Post Op Questionnaire

How would you rate your general well being since your operation? (select one option only)

Almost back to normal

Have you had to seek medical advice (from the hospital, your GP or a nurse) regarding anything to do with your operation since you were discharged from hospital care? (select one option only)

☒ No

How much pain are you in following your operation? (select one option only)

Mild

Which pain-killers are you still currently needing for pain after your operation? (select multiple options)

Paracetamol

Bowel motions (stool) can change after an operation. Which term best describes them now? (select one option only)

Normal

Have your stools become pale since your operation (yellow)

☒ No

Submission details

Submitted by

[PATIENT](#) (19 Mar 2024, 7:44pm)

Requested by

[Automated schedule](#) (19 Mar 2024, 7:44pm)

Reviewed by

Nothing to show

Tags

Notes

None

[+ Add note](#)

Requested by: [jody.carvell@nuh.nhs.uk](#) 18 Mar 2024, 9:13am

Last reviewed by: [jody.carvell@nuh.nhs.uk](#) 18 Mar 2024, 9:14am View more (3)

Contains: Hernia: Post Op Questionnaire

Hernia: Post Op Questionnaire

[Edit form](#) [Trends \(1\)](#)

Form scores (click for calculation details)

Total Score 6/20

How would you rate your general well being since your operation? (select one option only)

Better than before

Have you had to seek medical advice (from the hospital, your GP or a nurse) regarding anything to do with your operation

☒ Yes 1

Requested by: [jody.carvell@nuh.nhs.uk](#) 29 Feb 2024, 1:22pm

Last reviewed by: [jody.carvell@nuh.nhs.uk](#) 1 Mar 2024, 8:08am

Contains: Hernia: Post Op Questionnaire

Hernia: Post Op Questionnaire

[Edit form](#) [Trends \(1\)](#)

Form scores (click for calculation details)

Total Score 7/20

How would you rate your general well being since your operation? (select one option only)

Better than before

Have you had to seek medical advice (from the hospital, your GP or a nurse) regarding anything to do with your operation

☒ Yes 1

Requested by: [Automated schedule](#) 21 Feb 2024, 9:32pm

Last reviewed by: [jody.carvell@nuh.nhs.uk](#) 22 Feb 2024, 8:32am

Contains: Hernia: Post Op Questionnaire

Hernia: Post Op Questionnaire

[Edit form](#) [Trends \(1\)](#)

Form scores (click for calculation details)

Total Score 8/20

How would you rate your general well being since your operation? (select one option only)

Worse than before my operation, but getting better 1

Have you had to seek medical advice (from the hospital, your GP or a nurse) regarding anything to do with your operation

☒ Yes 1

Photograph Submissions

Discharged



Continued review through platform



Outpatient Follow Ups, SSI and Haematoma

After submission of questionnaire by patient, % of patients requiring contact by SCP N=29/389 (7.4%)

Surgical Site Infections N=16

Haematomas N=14

Results

HVLC elective procedures and reattendance to STU within 0-29 days

	Digital submissions from patients who participate in study 1st Jan 2024 – 31st Dec 2024		1st Jan 2024 – 31st Dec 2024	1st Jan 2023 -31st Dec 2023
Had surgery			1047	1084
Patients not in study	638		xx	xx
Patients invited	409		xx	xx
Invited but did not consent	20 (4.8%)		xx	xx
Patients who completed 7 day post operative questionnaire	389 (95.2%)		xx	xx
Consented but STU attendance	28 (7.2%)	P<0.0001 Chi square	xx	xx
Invited did not consent to study STU attendance	10 (50%)			
STU attendance of patients not in study	123/638 (19.2%)	P<0.0001 Chi square	xx	xx
STU attendance in patients invited into study (Intention to Treat)	38/409 (9.2%)			
Total STU attendance			161 (15.3%)	93 (8.6%)

Costings

Cost Summary of Original Procedure and Total Cost of STU/Ward/Theatre for Post Operative complication

Cost of follow up appointments

	Original Procedure (Day case and Inpatient)	STU Stay
	Avg. Cost Per Patient	Avg. Cost Per Patient on STU
Total Hernia	-£3,139.00	£831.90
Total Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy	-£3,287.04	£1010.82

	Cost	Average Cost Per Patient
Isla Digital Platform Annual (Whole Trust)	£292,915.00	£13.44
PIFU		High % return to STU or A/E
New Patient Appointment		£201.02
Follow Up Appointment		£83.50
Stu Attendance		£921

Group	Percentage Attending STU	Number Attending	Comparison / Adjustment	Attendances Avoided	Cost Saving (at £921 each)
Patients not in study	19.2%	123 / 638	–	–	–
Patients in study	9.2%	38 / 409	–	–	–
If not in study group had 9.2%	9.2%	59 (expected)	123 – 59 = 64 fewer	64	£59,000
If reduced to 7.2% (percentage of patients consenting and completing digital follow up)	7.2%	46 (expected)	123 – 46 = 77 fewer	77	£70,917



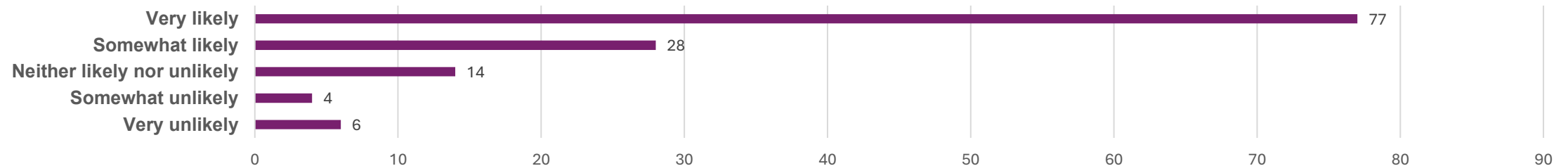
Patient Satisfaction Survey

- Patient Demographics
- 129 patients completed satisfaction survey (33%)

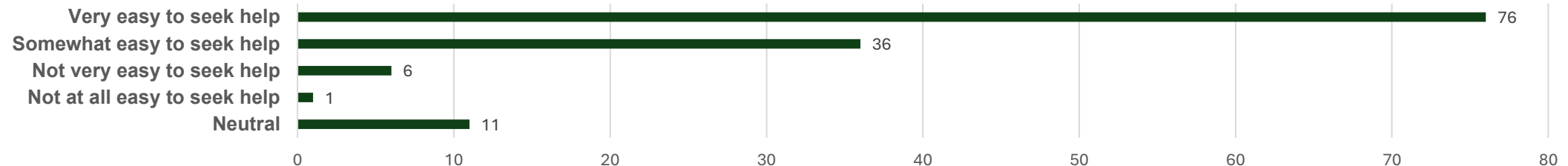
Procedure	Anti-reflux surgery	Hernia repair	Laparoscopic cholecystectomy
Number of Patients Responses (%)	2(2%)	105(81%)	22(17%)
Sex (%) Male	2%	68%	5%
Sex (%) Female	0%	14%	12%
Age Range			
18-40	0%	1%	2%
40-60	2%	27%	8%
40-70	0%	31%	5%
70+	0%	23%	2%

Patient Satisfaction Survey

- 117 (90%) were happy with the digital follow-up process
- Would you be likely to use digital follow-up over telephone/ hospital appointments for follow-up in the future, if given the choice?



- Did you feel you could easily seek help if needed (for concerns about your recovery from surgery)?



- 109 (84%) patients felt reassured by the digital follow up process
- 108 (83%) Saving time
- 57 (44%) Avoiding transport costs



Conclusion

- Patients in the digital follow up study have a significantly lower attendance at STU.
- Good satisfaction from patient's questionnaire responses.
 - Patients found digital follow up acceptable and convenient.
- The digital follow process showed a reduced number of unnecessary face to face appointments, so that patients who need physical review can access them more readily.