

THE IMPACT OF PRE OPERATIVE
ASSESSMENT CLINICS ON
SURGICAL CANCELLATIONS AND
OPERATING THEATRE EFFICIENCY

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Abstract

Cancellation of elective day case surgeries is an enduring problem in every health care facility. Last minute cancellations of pre-booked operations causes anxiety, frustration and anger in patients and leads to the inefficient use of valuable operating theatre time and resources. Studies have reported that cancellations have depressive effects on patients and families due to the emotional involvement prior to surgery.

Preoperative assessment of patients have shown to reduce surgical cancellations on the day of the surgery. Preoperative assessment clinics prepare the patient for surgery and anaesthesia. The other reported benefits of preoperative assessment clinics are it reduces unnecessary laboratory and radiological testing, and specialist consultations.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of Preoperative Assessment Clinics on surgical cancellations. This is a hospital based study conducted in a Model 2 Co. Dublin Hospital. The hospital management introduced a new protocol guided nurse-led preoperative assessment clinic where preoperative assessment of all elective surgical patients was made mandatory. The new clinic started functioning in February 2016.

The study was conducted over an 11 month period from July 2015 to May 2016. Surgical cancellation rates and theatre efficiency was studied for 7 months prior to introduction of the clinic and 4 months after the introduction of the new clinic. A quasi experimental study design was adopted. Data was collected through retrospective review of medical notes and the theatre register during the pre-intervention period. Special registers were introduced during the post-intervention period to record cancellations and delays, medical notes and theatre register were also reviewed on a need basis.

A significant reduction in the number of cancellations were demonstrated and theatre efficiency had doubled during the post-intervention period. All the results were statistically significant. The study concludes that preoperative assessment clinics can significantly reduce surgical cancellations and improve operating theatre efficiency.