

Frontline and Patient Centred: Orthopaedic Screening in Primary care (OSiP)

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Background: Reducing waiting times for Orthopaedic consultation has been a significant issue for Health Departments internationally, for many years. With Activity Based Funding we not only need to be responsive to increasing demand and patient expectations but organisations face financial penalty wherein nationally recommended wait times are not met. The need for cost efficient service models which improve and indeed accelerate access to comprehensive diagnosis and co-ordinated management for patients with chronic musculo-skeletal conditions which are patient centric vs hospital centric are obvious.

Methods: OSiP is based in the primary sector and set up to allow direct referral from General Practitioners, thereby negating the need for referral and addition to Orthopaedic wait lists. The opportunity to utilise Chronic Disease Management and Better Access to Mental Health plans, allows care to be delivered from within the primary sector at no direct cost to the state health department with the patient's General Practitioner more engaged in the continuing care.

Results: To date, over a thousand patients have been seen with a discharge rate of 72%. At the time of survey over 300 patients responded, reporting satisfaction levels above an average of 95% across 14 different measures including care received, service model and location, outcome and information to continue self management. Across 7 service parameters, General Practitioners reported a satisfaction rate in excess of 92%, including a rating of 100% for satisfaction with the information they received in terms of communication about a patient's assessment and treatment planning.

Discussion: A recently completed economic evaluation found that the Physiotherapy Screening model is highly cost effective. Staff involved including Physiotherapists, Psychologists, Pharmacists, Dieticians and Occupational Therapist working across public and private domains report higher job satisfaction, operating in full scope and developing competencies in extended scope such as limited prescribing, requesting and interpreting medical imaging.