

Abstract citation ID: znac269.086

650 “Promoting Adequate Consenting for the Risks of Peri-Operative COVID-19 Complications in Patients Undergoing Surgery During the Pandemic”

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Introduction: Patients with COVID-19 infection peri-operatively can suffer with significant cardiovascular and pulmonary complications, increasing mortality. Clinicians should discuss these risks with their patients as per the Royal College of Surgeons of England guidance (2020), so that patients can make informed decisions.

Method: Our aim was to identify whether the complications associated with COVID-19 in the peri-operative period was documented on the consent forms of both emergency and elective general surgical patients. To encourage clinicians to consent their patients, we devised a colourful poster, the ‘COVID-19 Consent Poster (CCP)’ which was placed next to the consent form on wards, outpatient clinics and the emergency department.

Results: A total of 49 procedures took place in the two-week period, of which 67% (n= 34) of patients were consented for the COVID-19 risk, and 33% (n= 15) were not. Following implementation of the CCP, data was recollected to identify whether practice had changed. During this time frame, 26 procedures took place out of which 50% (n=13) were not consented for the risks of COVID-19 complications.

Conclusions: Following implementation of the CCP, we saw initial rise in the number of consents, but this soon declined. We believe, this might be due to the rates of COVID-19 decreasing in the hospital and the community during the data collection period. Despite these figures, the importance of informed consent around peri-operative complications of COVID-19 remains with more of the population still getting infected with new variants emerging each year.