

Game Changers

SURGICAL AMBULATORY SERVICE (SAmS) – ONE STEP BEYOND EmSU!

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We previously reported how the Emergency Surgical Unit (EmSU) revolutionised the management of unscheduled general surgery in the Belfast Trust.¹ Having just celebrated its 7th birthday it has established itself as a pioneer of ‘good surgical practice’, delivering high quality emergency surgical care all day, every day. Regardless, Emergency Departments continue to be overwhelmed and new initiatives have spawned to address the ever-increasing demand.

Ambulatory care is the latest initiative to emerge with the principal aim of avoiding hospital admissions whilst affording more ergonomic, efficient care at source. NHS England have established a template for ‘Same Day Emergency Care’² and this blueprint has been successfully piloted and developed. Twelve established principals underpin successful Surgical Ambulatory Emergency Care.³

Recognising a list of ‘Ambulatory sensitive conditions’, pathways and protocols can be designed to facilitate enhanced patient flow and high-quality care. SAmS, the Belfast Trust model, was piloted on the 1st June 2017 becoming fully operational one year later. It now boasts a full complement of Medical and Nursing staff operating 5 days a week drawing referrals from Emergency Departments and Primary Care.

SAmS manages a median of 20 cases daily with access to ‘same day’ radiology and expedient endoscopy and surgery. Its success is reflected by a 20% decrease in the number of admissions to EmSU. Successful clinical environments can create more work but treat patients who would otherwise suffer from the frustration of protracted investigation pathways and lengthy waiting lists if managed through traditional channels.

With the backdrop of Covid19, to avoid overcrowding in Emergency Departments, we are on the cusp of seismic regional change through the introduction of Urgent Treatment Centres whose principal aim is to triage to Ambulatory Care. Well established Ambulatory Units like SAmS are pivotal to the success of this model.

“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent; it is the one most adaptable to change.”⁴

REFERENCES:

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