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**P-027 REDUCING SURGICAL WAIT TIMES FOR ABDOMINAL WALL HERNIA OPERATIONS POST COVID-19 BY USING DEDICATED CLINICS**

M. Renna, S. Lyon, J. Sindhar, H. Ebied

*General Surgery, Guy's & St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London, United Kingdom*

**Background:** Specialization influences the way that surgeons deliver care and has a direct impact on doctors, healthcare systems and patients. Hernias impact around 2% of the population and repairs are among the most common procedures performed globally. The European Hernia Society recognizes a growing need for specialist surgeons as abdominal wall surgery becomes more complex with newer techniques and more challenging cases being encountered. At this trust, a new specialized hernia clinic was implemented in response to COVID backlogs and the growing need and proven benefits of specialization. The project's aim was to review the impact on procedure wait times and outcomes for hernia repairs.

**Methods:** A retrospective review of patients undergoing hernia repairs between June 2019 to June 2021 was compared to similar patients who attended the hernia clinic between February 2021 to March 2022. Included operations were inguinal, femoral, and umbilical hernia repairs. Data collected included diagnoses, percentage of day case and wait times.

**Results:** 59 patients underwent surgery pre-intervention with average wait times of 191 days. 72 post-intervention patients had an average wait of 59 days. 59 patients were still awaiting surgery post-clinic. Open surgery incidence increased from 66% to 79%. 86% of patients post-intervention were day cases, compared to 78% of pre-intervention patients.

**Conclusions:** The new hernia clinic has reduced wait times for surgery and improved day-case rates despite more cases being performed as open procedures. Following these results, the clinic system shows great promise and hernia surgery has the potential to evolve as a sub-specialty.