

### 320 The Initial Impact Of COVID-19 On Paediatric Spinal Services Across Scotland

M. Newman, E. Garrido, A. Tsirikos

Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

**Background:** The COVID-19 pandemic has meant a significant decline in the activities of the paediatric spinal services in Scotland.

**Method:** All referrals to the Scottish paediatrics spinal service from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were analysed. Comparison was made to the same period in 2019. All orthotist initial consultations and all paediatrics spinal theatre activity in Scotland from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 was analysed and compared to the previous year.

**Results:** There was a 64.3% decline in referrals during the first wave of the pandemic in Scotland to the paediatric spinal service. The mean wait time to be seen in 1<sup>st</sup> clinic for a new referral was 6.56 weeks in 2020 compared to 10.94 in 2019. There were however 60 patients still waiting to be seen. The number of paediatric spinal operations declined by 34% during March to June 2020 when compared to the same months

in 2019 There was a reduction of 50% of new paediatric patients seen by orthotists from March – June 2020 when compared to 2019

**Conclusions:** COVID-19 has had a significant effect on paediatric spinal services in Scotland. This is likely due to a combination of service delivery factors and patient factors. This is likely to result in delays to children getting the care they require for their spinal condition. There will also be a back-log of patients requiring to be seen when services start to re-establish themselves. There are several options available to department to optimise efficiency, such as video consultants and streamlining referral systems.