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TU3.2 Has Covid-19 Pandemic affected the management of patient's with colorectal cancer?

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Introduction: Patients on the cancer pathway should be investigated on the 2 weeks wait pathway, but Covid-19 pandemic had universal impact on the Healthcare systems. One of the main worries was the impact on cancer patients due to delayed diagnosis and management. Our study looks at the timeframe of investigations for colorectal cancer during the second wave of the pandemic compared to pre covid time.

Method: Retrospective study looking at the waiting time to investigate patients with +ve qFIT test during the second wave of pandemic (from November 2020 till March 2021).

Results: During this period 150 patients had +ve qFIT test, the main presenting symptom was Change in bowel habits. 90 patients were investigated with colonoscopy, only 16 (17%) patients had the colonoscopy done within 2 weeks from the qFIT result. 23 patients had colonoscopy 2–3 weeks from the result. 30 patients (33%) had the colonoscopy between 3–4 weeks, and 21 patients had to wait between 1–6 months to have the colonoscopy.

Out of the 150 patients, 60 patients were investigated primarily with CT scan or CT colon.

Conclusion: During the covid-19 pandemic, majority of patients in our trust were investigated within one month of +ve qFIT test but yet there was some delay in carrying out the investigations compared to the normal pathway and more patients had CT scans as primary investigations before being referred for colonoscopy.