

491 Comparison of Pandemic and Pre-pandemic Practices of Managing Acute Appendicitis

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Aim: Acute appendicitis (AA) is a common indication for abdominal surgery, with more than 30,000 appendicectomies performed in England per year. However, SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) changed usual surgical practices following advice to minimise laparoscopic surgery, and instead favouring conservative management, or open surgery for AA.

Method: In this study, we compared the management of 50 patients with suspected/confirmed AA during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic at a district general hospital (DGH) with our usual practices, against 50 patients admitted with suspected/confirmed AA during a similar time period, one year prior to the pandemic.

Results: Demographics of patients in both groups were comparable with median age of 34 in the pandemic vs 32.5 in the pre-pandemic group. 74% of patients in the pandemic group (PG) underwent imaging to confirm appendicitis, compared to 58% of patients in the pre-pandemic group (PPG). 64% of PG patients were treated conservatively, compared to 8% in PPG patients. Outcomes demonstrated re-attendance events of 12% in the PG, as compared to 10% in the PPG, although the follow up period was longer in the PPG. Despite a significantly smaller number of patients managed surgically during the pandemic, 27% of patients undergoing appendicectomies had post-operative complications in the PG, as compared to 7% in the PPG.

Conclusions: During the pandemic, more patients at our DGH with AA were treated conservatively, more patients had re-attendance events and post-operative complications when compared to patients in the pre-pandemic group.