Patterns of Attendances to the Hospital Emergency Eye Care Service: A National Multicentre Study in England.

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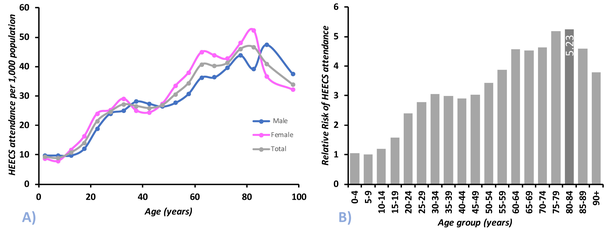
Introduction::

Over the past two decades there has been a rise in demand for ophthalmology-led Hospital Emergency Eye Care Services (HEECS). In this retrospective, multi-centre, cross-sectional study we report attendance rates for HEECS across 13 hospitals in England and characterise the patterns of presentation and diagnostic frequencies.

Methods:

A Retrospective, cross-sectional, observational multi-centre (n=13) study to assess HEECS attendances over a 28-day study period. Data derived included: number of attendances, patient demographics and diagnoses. Age and gender variations, impact of day of the week on attendance patterns, diagnostic frequencies and estimates of the annual incidence and attendance rates were evaluated.

ANNUAL AGE SPECIFIC ATTENDANCE RATE PER 1,000 POPULATION FOR HEECS ATTENDANCES (A); RELATIVE RISK OF HEECS PRESENTATION FOR EACH 5-YEAR GROUP (B)



A GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF ALL SITES THAT TOOK PART IN THE ENGLISH EMERGENCY EYE CARE (TRIPLE E) STUDY IN ENGLAND INCLUDING BASELINE DETAILS ABOUT EACH CENTRE.

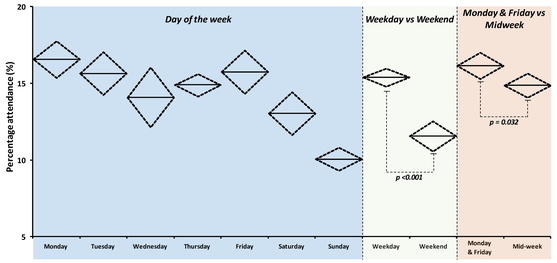


Name of Study Centre	Patients Recruited (n)	Urgent eye care Model	Days open per week
Moorfields (City Road), London	7010	Walk in	7
Manchester Royal Eye Hospital	2064	Walk in	7
Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle upon Tyne	1732	Walk in	6
University Hospitals of Leicester	1483	Walk in	7
St James' University Hospital, Leeds	1095	Booked clinic	7
St George's Hospital, London	814	Walk in	7
Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth	638	Booked clinic	6
St Thomas', London	620	Walk in	5
Bradford Royal Infirmary	607	Booked clinic	6
The County Hospital, Hereford	529	Walk in	7
York Teaching Hospitals	528	Booked clinic	7
Royal Bolton Hospital	396	Booked clinic	5
Scarborough Hospital	151	Booked clinic	5
Total	17667		

Results:

A total of 17,667 patient (mean ± standard deviation age = 49.6±21.8 years) attendances were identified with estimated annual attendance rate of HEECS of 26.8 per 1,000 population. Significantly more females (53%) than males (47%) attended HEECS (p<0.001). Weekends were associated with a significant reduction in attendances compared to weekdays ($\chi 2=6.94$, p<0.001). Among weekdays, Mondays and Fridays were associated with significantly higher attendances compared to midweek ($\chi 2=2.20$, p=0.032). Presenting pathologies involving the external eye, cornea and conjunctiva accounted for 28.6% of the caseload. This was followed by trauma-related pathologies (13.7%) and adnexal pathologies (13.6 %).

PERCENTAGE OF PATIENT ATTENDANCES BASED ON DAY OF THE WEEK WITH MEAN ± SD SHOWN.



Conclusion:

This is the largest multicentre study assessing attendance patterns in HEECS in England and the first to report annual attendance rates to HEECS. We have, for the first time, observed a "weekend effect" in relation to attendance to HEECS. Differences in health seeking behaviour and lack of awareness of HEECS weekend services maybe partly attributed to the differences observed. Our findings, along with the type of presentations, have the potential to guide commissioners with future planning of HEECS.

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