

Same-day surgery cancellation! An avoidable blight or an unpredictable calamity?

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Introduction

- Same-day cancellation of surgeries negatively impacts patient experience and leads to poor resource utilisation.
- Approximately 13.9% of all inpatient operations are cancelled on the day of surgery in the NHS; causing distress to patients and frustration for staff (1).
- With an ever-growing demand for theatre slots following the COVID-19 pandemic, the effective use of theatre time is of utmost importance.

Aim

To determine the reasons for same-day gynaecological surgery cancellation at Walsall Manor Hospital in England

Methods

- A retrospective audit was conducted at Walsall Manor Hospital (WMH) in England over a 17-month period between April 2021 and August 2022.
- The reasons behind all same-day gynaecological surgery cancellations within this timeframe were evaluated using hospital databases.
- Themes were drawn from the data and discussed with the gynaecology team to collaboratively elucidate solutions.

Results



Figure 1: A line graph illustrating the total number of same day cancellations per month.

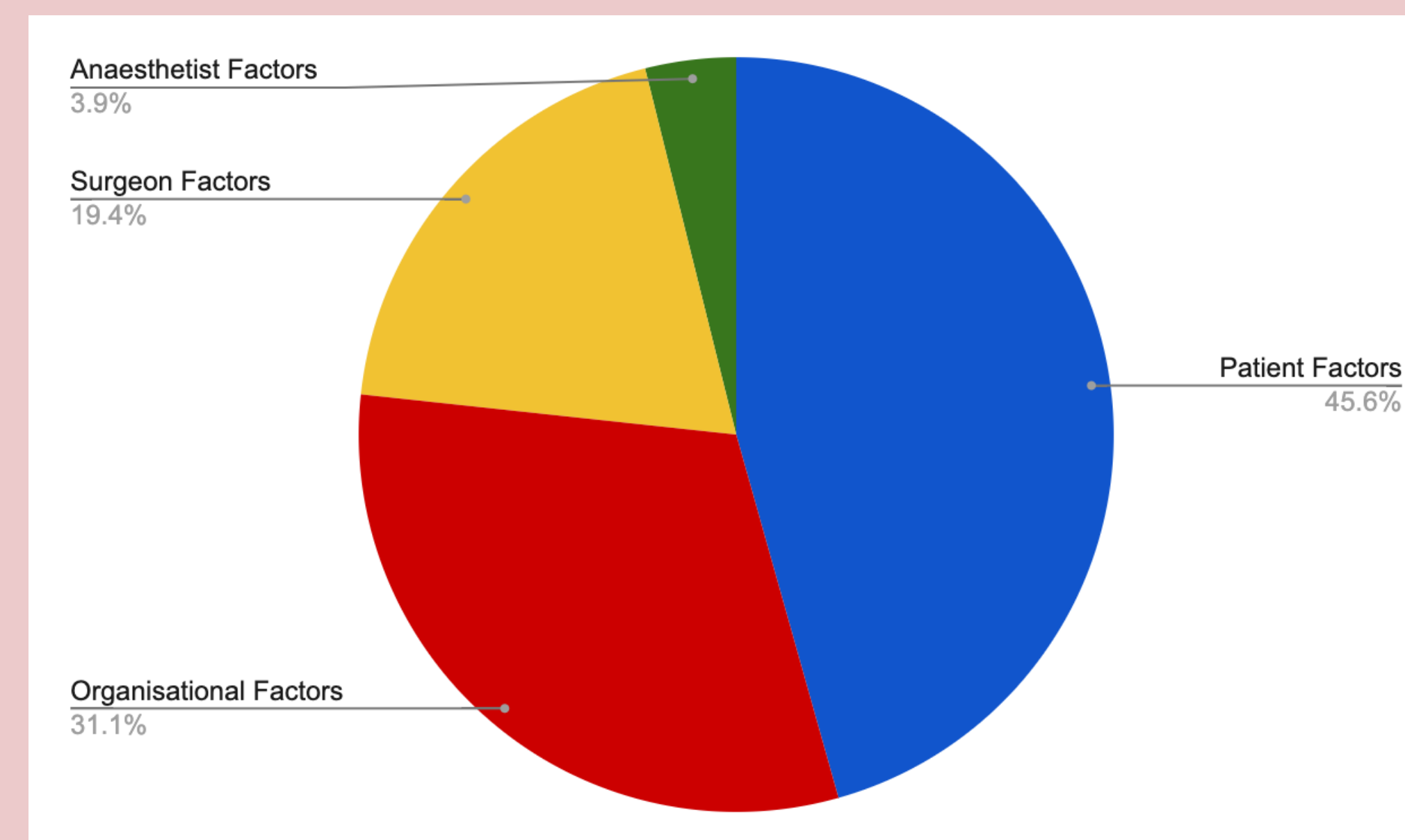


Figure 2: Reasons for same-day cancellations based on the category of cause. Patient factors made up the majority of causes for cancellation.

Category	Reason for cancellation	Total number	Percentage
Patient factor	“Unfit for surgery”	206	25.6%
Organisational factor	“Lack of theatre time”	127	15.8%
Patient factor	“Operation no longer wanted”	76	9.4%
Surgical factor	“Procedure no longer required following review”	70	8.6%
Patient factor	“Non-compliance with pre-operative guidance”	59	7.3%

Table 1: Table illustrating the top 5 reasons for same-day cancellations identified.

Discussion

- Same-day surgical cancellations impact theatre efficiency and have significant negative ramifications for patients, both socially and psychologically.
- The most common reasons related to patient factors and so thorough follow-up and patient education can help tackle this issue.
- These findings will form part of an overall quality improvement project to reduce surgical cancellations at Walsall Manor Hospital.

Future Recommendations

- Telephone appointment a week prior to elective surgery to confirm attendance and pre-operative instruction compliance.
- Meticulous planning of surgical lists.
- Timely re-review of patient suitability for surgery prior to operation.
- Improved staff rostering for surgical lists with physician continuity.

Conclusion

Patient factors contributed to the majority of all same-day cancellations; with more thorough follow-up and patient education a significant proportion of same-day cancellations can be avoided.

References

(1) Wong DJN, Harris SK, Moonsinghe SR et al. Cancelled operations: a 7-day cohort study of planned adult inpatient surgery in 245 UK National Health Service Hospitals. British Journal of Anaesthesia 2018; 121: 730–8.