

Introduction

- Pelvic organ prolapse happens in 50% of women who have had vaginal deliveries ⁽¹⁾
- Prior to COVID-19, patients were routinely followed up in secondary care every 6 months
- During COVID-19, there was a service disruption
 - Urogynaecology most affected ⁽²⁾
 - Joint Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology /British Society of Urogynaecology Guidance on Management of Urogynaecology Conditions and Vaginal Pessary Use during the COVID-19 pandemic was published

Design

The design for the study included selecting patients who are using pessary for managing their pelvic organ prolapse and who are registered with the NHS Grampian.

The study looked at the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the services of pessary clinics and whether it resulted in more complications in the patients.

Method

958 patients registered with NHS Grampian for pessary management were selected, and data were collected using patient identifiers, relevant data were collected for each patient from TrakCare.

Data was analyzed in Microsoft Excel.

Results

In terms of demographics, 38% of the patients belong to the age group of 71-80 years, and 37.8% of the patients belong to the overweight category in terms of BMI. 55% of the patients in the study group were using topical estrogen cream.

In terms of incontinence, around 45% of patients had some form of incontinence, a 35% had mixed urinary incontinence, 34% had urinary incontinence, followed by 28% had stress incontinence, and 2.4% reporting unspecified.

Looking at the pessary-related complication, around 54% had no complications, and excoriation and ulceration contributed to 18.7% of the most commonly found complications in the group.

From a Covid-19 perspective, 93% had pre-Covid referral and 7% had post covid-19 referral. Around 421 patients had telephone consultations during covid-19 pandemic, out of which 97% were given a follow-up appointment. Out of the 421 telephone consultations, 31% had delayed appointments, considering the 3 months time frame according to RCOG recommendations.

Around 73% of the patients who had delayed consultation during the COVID-19 pandemic had no complications, and amongst those who had complications, excoriation and ulceration were the common complications reported similar to the overall study group. Around 44% of patients in the study group, had their routine follow-ups affected due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Results (continued)

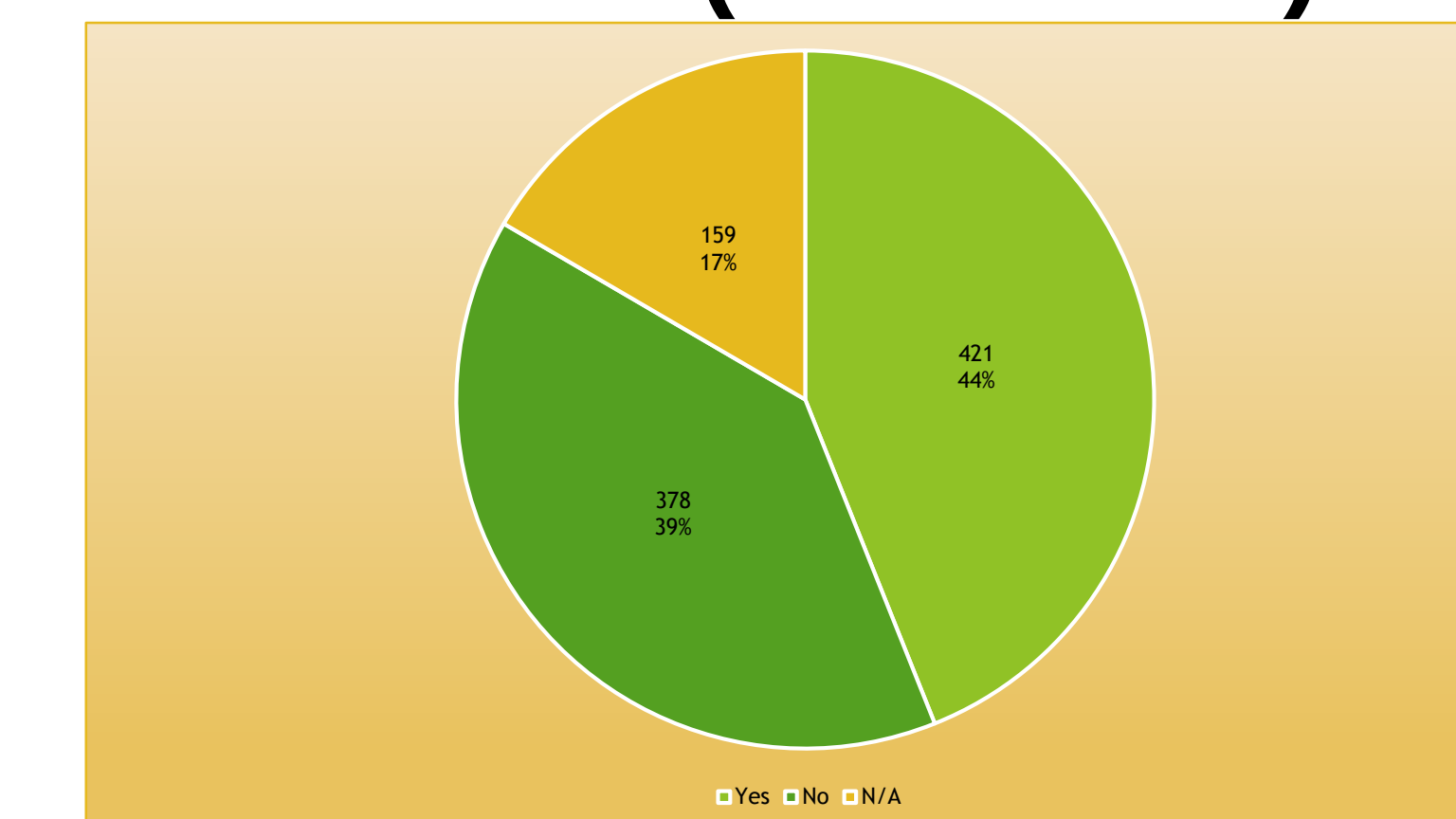


Chart 1. The proportion of patients whose routine follow-ups were affected by COVID-19

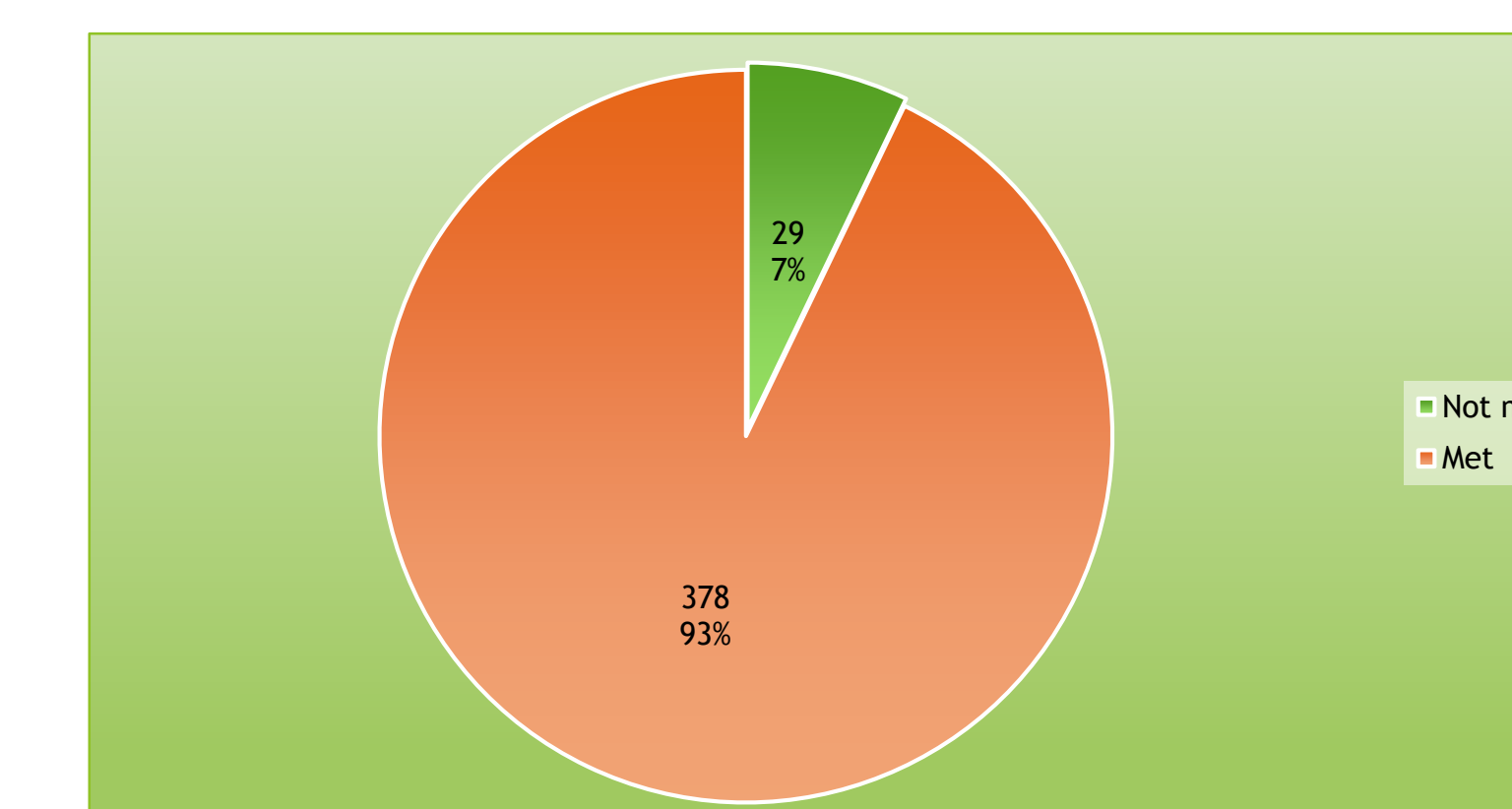


Chart 2. Patients meeting the 6 month benchmark

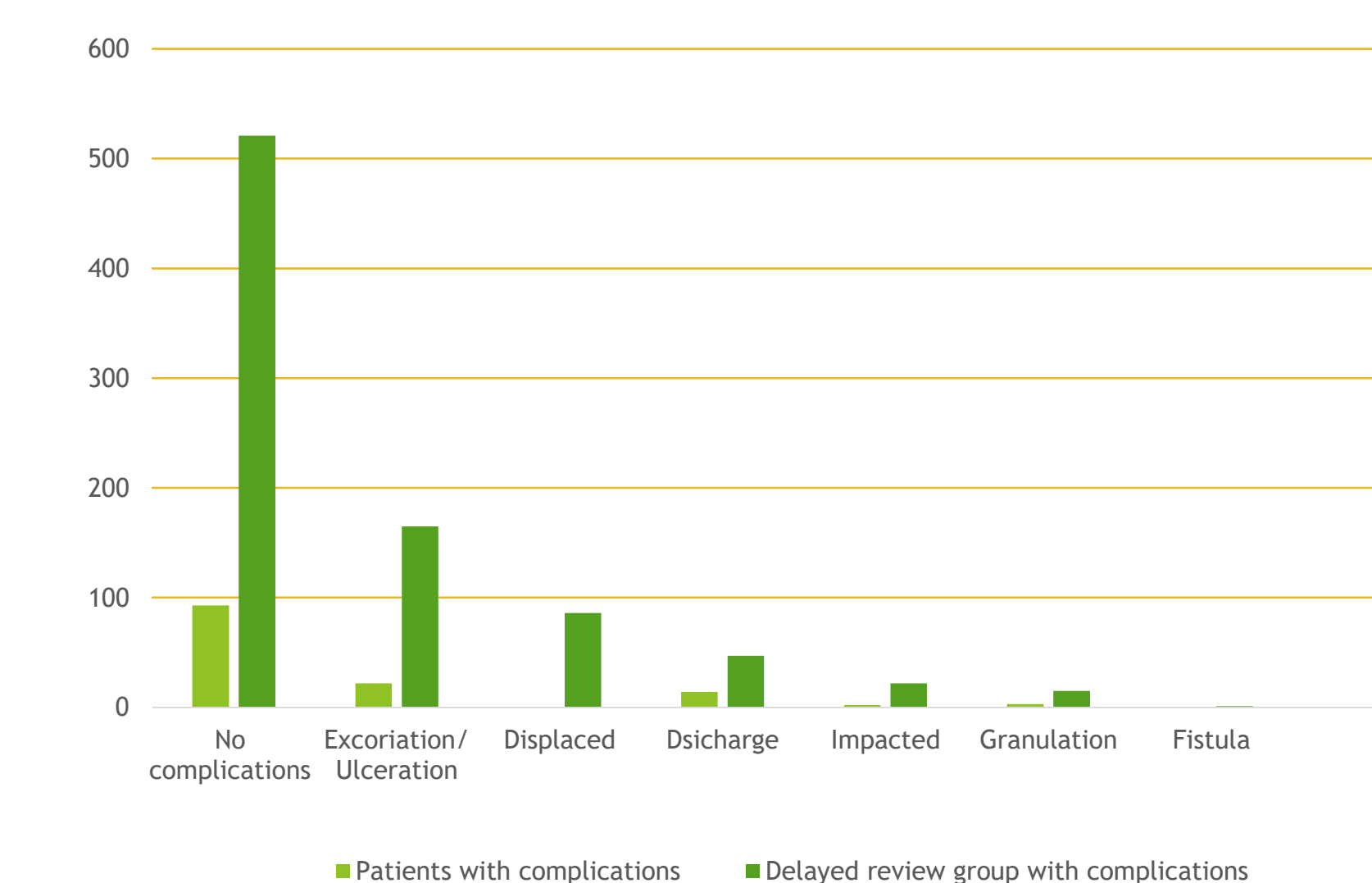


Chart 3. Complications in the overall group v/s the delayed review group

Conclusions

The study showed that around 93% of the patients met the benchmark set by the **Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology** for pessary management.

Overall looking at the association between complications and delayed appointments didn't show a significant increase from the overall sample trends.

The conclusion from the study shows how to effectively prioritize services during a national medical emergency.

Furthermore, it discovered the use of telephone/video consultation can be efficient in triaging patients for routine pessary follow-ups even after the pandemic.

As part of the recommendations, further studies need to be conducted to possibly increase the follow-up criteria set according to the RCOG.

Bibliography

1. NHS Grampian, 2014. *Pelvic Organ Prolapse - Information for Patients and Carers*. 1st ed. NHS Grampian.
2. Jha, S. and Pradhan, A., 2021. *Joint RCOG/BSUG Guidance on Management of Urogynaecological Conditions and Vaginal Pessary Use During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. 2nd ed. RCOG, BSUG.