

Delayed access to care and late presentations in children during
the COVID-19 pandemic: a snapshot survey of 4,075
paediatricians in the United Kingdom and Ireland

Richard Lynn, Jacob L Avis, Simon Lenton, Zahin Amin-Chowdhury,
Shamez N Ladhani, on behalf of the British Paediatric Surveillance Unit
(BPSU) Scientific Committee³ and paediatricians in the UK and the
Republic of Ireland

Methods

- 4075 consultant paediatricians on the BPSU list were contacted via Redcap
- A reminder was sent out after 5 days
- They were asked - during the previous 14 days, they had seen any children who, in their opinion, presented later than they would have expected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e. delayed presentation).
- Over the next 7 days, 2,433 (60%) paediatricians responded.

- Reporting card sent 4,075 recipients on 24/04/2020
- 2,433 (~60%) returned surveys
- Reminder emails sent on 27/04/2020 & 30/04/2020

Questions

- In the last 7 days have you been on
- In the last 14 days how many children with late presentations have you seen include none x age
- Do you think the delayed presentation was related to COVID-19

[Home](#) [Help](#)



Snap-shot survey

BPSU 'snap-shot' survey on delayed presentations to hospital

A broad definition of a "Late Presentation" is any child who presented **LATER THAN YOU WOULD HAVE EXPECTED** (resulting in more treatment or worse outcome, or delayed presentation of a new condition such as ALL, diabetes mellitus, etc) because of any number of reasons, including the "stay at home message", parental concerns about seeking medical help or coming to hospital, etc.

For further information on the 'snap-shot' survey, [click here](#)

1. In the last 14 days, have you been on: (tick all that apply)
* must provide value

Clinical duty (A&E, ED, PAU)
 Clinical duty (ward/clinic/patient-facing)
 Self-isolating
 Working but not direct patient contact
 Other

2. In the last 14 days, how many children with late presentations have you seen in these age-groups (state number(s) in the box: If none, please report zero in the boxes):

2.1 Infants under 1 years
* must provide value

2.2 1-5 years
* must provide value

2.3 Older than 5 years
* must provide value

3. In your opinion, do you think that the delayed presentations were related to the COVID-19 response?
* must provide value

Not at all
 Not sure
 Yes, some cases
 Yes, most cases
 Unable to comment

next

4. Any other comments:

Thank you for completing this 'snap-shot' survey.

Notice

With your contribution to the British Paediatric Surveillance Unit (BPSU) 'reporting scheme' the BPSU continues to have a major impact on child health.

The BPSU Privacy Notice is available to view at <https://www.rpsch.ac.uk/bpsu-privacy-notice>

Results - 1

- 419 clinicians reported what they considered delays in presentation
- 32% of these worked in Emergency department or paediatric assessment unit
- For this group newly presenting diabetes and DKA was most common late presentation. Sepsis and malignancy was also seen
- Of the 18% working on paediatric ward late presentation following labour and feeding issues following discharged were reported
- Community clinicians reported late child protection referrals
- 8 deaths were reported where the clinician felt delays played a part.

Results - 2

- Of the 18% working on paediatric ward late presentation following labour and feeding issues following discharged were reported
- Community clinicians reported late child protection referrals
- 9 deaths were reported where the clinician felt delays played a part.

Conclusion

although we do not have baseline data for comparison, our findings highlight

- An urgent need to improve public health messaging for parents, which until recently instructed everyone to stay at home
- Parents should continue to access medical care if they are concerned and must not delay getting
- Otherwise, the unintended consequences of lockdown will do more harm and claim more children's lives than COVID-19.

Limitations

- Snap shot survey – first ever undertaken using BPSU methods.
- Could have been more detailed in answers it sought
- Depends on personal opinion
- Depends on memory
- Depends on parents being open about delays and reporting them
- No baseline data to gauge against