

Expectations and Concerns of Patients Attending a Spinal Outpatient Clinic

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AIM Identify the baseline patient expectations and concerns whilst attending spinal orthopaedic outpatient clinic in the NHS and private healthcare sector.

BACKGROUND

- Addressing expectations and concerns is an important aspect of patient-centred healthcare.
- Most spinal surgery is elective and thus focussed on improving quality of life, although patients tend to have unrealistically high expectations¹.
- Evidence suggests alignment of patient and doctor expectations are an important predictor of outcome^{2,4}.
- There is little insight into subsequent differences between healthcare sectors.

METHODS

- Sociodemographic data and Patient Reported Outcome Measure (PROM) scores obtained from the caseload of a single orthopaedic spinal surgeon between April 2012-2018.
- Data was compiled with expectations and concerns obtained from the clinic letter (standard practice for surgeon) and analysed in SPSS.

RESULTS

- 940 patients were included in the final dataset with 498 from the NHS and 442 from the private sector.
- 1-in-6 had **undergone previous spinal surgery**.
- **Private patients** were significantly more likely to report **sleeping problems** ($p<.001$).
- **NHS patients were:** More **unsure** of expectations ($p<.001$) and **less frequently raised concerns** ($p<.001$).
- **Private patients were:** Expecting **diagnosis** and **treatment options** more frequently ($p<.001$). More concerned about **loss of function, pain** and **occupation**, as well as having **more specific concerns** ($p<.001$).

PROM Scores:

	Mean ± SD			P
	(ALL)	NHS Patients	Private Patients	
EQ VAS	51.3±24.1	50.2±23.3	52.1±24.6	NS
Lumbar Surgery Expectations	44.8±21.4	37.2±19.4	46.0±21.4	NS
NDI	39.7±20.6	42.0±21.0	35.0±19.1	.02
ODI	43.4±19.4	45.1±20.4	41.8±18.2	<.001
PHQ-9	10.3±7.6	11.5±8.1	8.9±6.8	<.001
GAD-7	7.1±6.5	8.2±7.0	5.9±5.6	<.001



Expectations:

Reduce Pain 41.9%	Diagnosis 23.0%	Treatment Options 13.5%	Unsure 10.5%
		Improve function 6.2%	Operation 4.6%

Concerns:

None Raised 27.0%	Continuation/Worsening of Pain 17.8%	Other 13.0%	Work-related 8.3%
	Loss of Function 15.9%	Permanent Disability 7.8%	Operation 7.6% Carer 2.7%

CONCLUSION

- This study identified that NHS and private sector patients have significantly different expectations and concerns at baseline. PROM scores indicative of disability level, anxiety and depression were worse in NHS patients compared to private patients. Private patients were more likely to report problems sleeping.
- **Future work should investigate these findings in context with clinical outcome.**

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