

4.15 A Review of Pulmonary Fibrosis Patients Journey of the Advanced Nurse Practitioner Satellite Clinic.

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Aim: To review pulmonary fibrosis patient's experiences in relation to the delivery of care in the satellite clinic in Ennis and Nenagh.

Method: A review of the patient journey in Ennis and Nenagh Outpatient's Department.

Background: Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF) is defined as a specific form of chronic, progressive fibrosing interstitial pneumonia of unknown cause, occurring primarily in older adults, and limited to the lungs (ATS 2017). IPF primarily presents with shortness of breath at rest or aggravated by exertion, dry cough and by the time symptoms have appeared irreversible lung damage has often already occurred. University Hospital Limerick is a dedicated expert centre for managing patients with Pulmonary Fibrosis, which covers a vast area. Despite this, patients were travelling significant long distances, using large amounts of oxygen and increased symptom burden. A satellite clinic was set up in Ennis and Nenagh outpatients to improve access to services for patients nearer their home, improve patient's experience and reduce oxygen consumption.

Findings: All PF patients seen in Ennis and Nenagh OPD found the information on their appointment letter had clear instructions on where their clinic appointment was being held including directions to the clinic. Patient's commented that reception was welcoming and there was a significantly shorter distance to walk for their appointment than at the University Hospital. Patients found that they had a significant reduced travelling time to get to their appointment and reduced walking distances in the hospital which consequently led to reduced O₂ consumption; this allowed for a reduced burden on cost, and travel time. A common theme highlighted was an improvement in the clinic experience. Patients noted a reduced time waiting and were home in a shorter period of time in compared to the bigger centre. Managing patients closer to home has proven an expert patient-centred approach leads to an improved patient experience, while notably patients commented that they also received an expert clinical examination on par with the expert center. While barriers to getting patients to the satellite clinic exist a great effort to accommodate patients nearer to home is essential.