

7.05 Respiratory Waitlist Initiative Clinic: a blueprint for the integrated care hubs?

Rachel Christner¹, Ciara Sherlock², Philippa Needham², Eoghan O'Regan², Fergal Moore², Niamh Duignan², Helen Mulryan¹, Olivia Healy¹, Veronica McGoldrick¹, Anthony O'Regan^{1,3}, Thomas McEnergy¹, Sinead M. Walsh^{1,2}, Ruth P Cusack¹.

1. Department of Respiratory Medicine, Galway University Hospital, Galway, Ireland.
2. Galway City Integrated Care Hub, Community Healthcare Organisation 2, Galway, Ireland.
3. Royal College of Physicians, Dublin, Ireland.

Hospital waiting lists have emerged as a pressing concern in modern healthcare. In 2021, the General Respiratory Clinic at Galway University Hospital had over 900 patients awaiting general review. A Waiting List Initiative Clinic was introduced in November 2021 to address this issue, with simultaneous waiting list validation.

Between November 2021 and July 2023, over nine clinics, 109 patients were offered an appointment from the routine waiting list. Patients completed a 'one-stop-shop' with spirometry followed by a multi-disciplinary team assessment comprising a Respiratory Consultant, CNS, and specialist Physiotherapist. Patients completed chest x-ray and bloods as required. Patients received up to 3 Initiative Clinic visits, dependent on the complexity of their condition, before they were discharged to GP care or referred onto respiratory general/specialist clinics. Baseline demographics, referral reason, time to review, interventions, investigations and outcomes were explored.

The clinics were attended by 98 patients. The primary source of referrals was from GPs (94%). Treatment was initiated or changed in 70% of patients. 22.4% patients were discharged at first review with a diagnosis, with 20% referred to general/specialist clinics (Figure 1). Regular validation of the acute hospital wait list occurred simultaneously to reduce overall wait times to access respiratory care.

The Initiative Clinic proved highly successful in reducing the waitlist, streamlining patient evaluations, and delivering necessary therapies. The approach of utilizing a multi-disciplinary team to assess non-urgent, appropriate referrals could be reproduced in integrated care as a means of reducing the pressure on acute hospital clinics.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

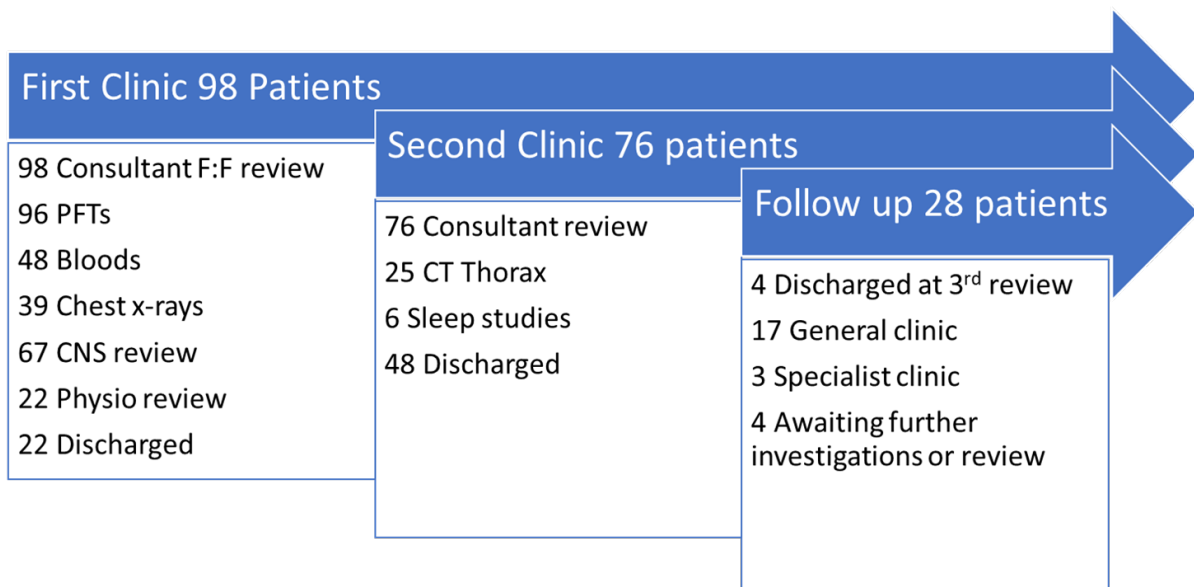


Figure 1: Waiting list initiative outcomes.

Abbreviations: CNS = Clinical nurse specialist; CT = Computed tomography; F:F = Face to face; PFTs = Pulmonary function testing; Physio = Physiotherapy.