

An Audit of COVID Swabs For Ophthalmology Patients Attending Gartnavel Theatre



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Introduction

- The number of patient’s currently undergoing ophthalmological surgery has reduced since the onset of the COVID pandemic
- Updated guidance¹ was circulated in August 2020 to aid with remobilization of services
- The main changes to guidance is that patients can be managed in 3 COVID-19 pathways: Red, Amber and Green (Figure 1)
- Individuals on a low-risk (Green) pathway require only Standard Infection Prevention & Control Precautions for procedures
- They would not require additional cleaning or theatre down time and they do not need to be anaesthetised or recovered in the operating theatre if intubation is required
- This could save time and resources, particularly if most patients are on the Green pathway

High-Risk COVID-19 Pathway Section 10: SICPs & TBPs	Medium Risk COVID-19 Pathway Section 9: SICPs & TBPs	Low Risk COVID-19 Pathway Section 7: SICPs
Any care facility where: a) untriaged individuals present for assessment or treatment (symptoms unknown) OR b) confirmed SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) positive individuals are cared for OR c) symptomatic or suspected COVID-19 individuals including those with a history of contact with a COVID-19 case, who have been triaged/clinically assessed and are waiting test results OR d) symptomatic individuals who decline testing	Any care facility where: a) triaged/clinically assessed individuals are asymptomatic and are waiting a SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) test result with no known recent COVID-19 contact OR b) testing is not required or feasible on asymptomatic individuals and infectious status is unknown OR c) asymptomatic individuals decline testing	Any care facility where: a) triaged/clinically assessed individuals with no symptoms or known recent COVID-19 contact who have isolated/shielded AND have a negative SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) test within 72 hours of treatment and, for planned admissions, have self-isolated from the test date OR b) Individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 and have had at least 3 consecutive days without fever or respiratory symptoms and a negative COVID-19 test OR c) patients or individuals are regularly tested (remain negative)

Figure 1: Examples of patient groups/facilities within these pathways

Aims

- Discover what proportion of our patients could be considered on the red, amber or green pathway during a 2 week period
- To assess whether improvement in COVID testing of patients preoperatively could aid in the planning of ophthalmology theatre cases

Methods

- Theatre lists for the time period in question were retrospectively collected
- Each patient was then individually searched on clinical portal to review swab results
- Patients were then triaged into a category according to the swab results and when the swabs were taken

Results

- 120 ophthalmology patients attended Gartnavel theatres in the time period in question
- 75 (62.5%) of these patients could be considered as Green therefore had swabs and negative results all within 72 hours of surgery
- 45 patients (37.5%) were on the Amber pathway
 - This could mean they had no swab taken or were awaiting results
 - 31 of these patients had a negative result in time for surgery but the swab had been taken out with the recommended 72 hours
 - This largely affected those that had surgery on a Monday or Tuesday which may reflect a difficulty in organising tests to be performed on a weekend
- There were no documented positive COVID swabs, so no Red patients
- The majority of patients in this audit could be considered to be on the low risk pathway (62.5%)
- however this number could potentially be increased if we improved our adherence to taking swabs within recommended 72 hours

Re-Audit

- After the results of the first audit we implemented swabbing of preoperative patients on a Saturday. The audit cycle was then repeated over another 2 weeks
- 89 patients were included and there were no positive swab results (no Red patients)
- 16 (18%) came under the Amber pathway and 73 (82%) under Green pathway

Conclusion

- The proportion of patients on the Green pathway greatly improved from 62.5% to 82% after introduction of Saturday swabbing
- This would indicate that the initiation of COVID testing of preoperative patients on the weekend has improved our adherence to the COVID testing guidance and could therefore improve our organisation of theatre cases
- 82% of our patients can be considered as Green and therefore only require Standard Infection Prevention & Control Precautions

References

1) COVID-19: Guidance for the remobilisation of services within health and care settings infection prevention and control recommendations. Version 1. August 2020. Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Public Health Wales (PHW), Public Health Agency (PHA) Northern Ireland, Health Protection Scotland (HPS)/National Services Scotland, Public Health England (PHE), NHS England.