



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Rannan na nOspideil Ghearmhíochaine
Aonad 4A – Áras Dargan
An Ceantar Theas
An Bothar Mileata
Cill Mhaighneann
BÁC 8

Acute Operations
Health Service Executive
Unit 4A - The Dargan Building
Heuston South Quarter
Military Road
Kilmainham
Dublin 8.

02nd December 2021

Peadar Tóibín,
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 56932/21* - To ask the Minister for Health the number of hospitals that have had lean performance analysis in terms of their throughput of patients most especially surgical patients in the past ten years. -Peadar Tóibín

Dear Deputy Tóibín,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Public Representation, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

Response

In order to respond to your query, we have liaised directly with the National Clinical Programme in Surgery who have advised that they have undertaken a number of initiatives focused on implementing Lean Methodology in Hospitals with the aim of increasing the throughput of surgical patients and driving efficiencies within surgical care. These initiatives include:

2010-2016

The Productive Operating Theatre Programme (TPOT) was a collaboration between the HSE, National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) and the National Clinical Programme in Surgery (NCPS) and was introduced initially as a pilot across 5 hospitals. This programme was based on a lean methodology approach not commonly used in healthcare in Ireland at this time. 25 multidisciplinary hospital teams engaged with this programme between 2010 and 2015. Off-site training was provided to hospital teams by the NHS on 3 occasions and subsequently by a team from the NCPS and the NCPA.

Hospitals that engaged with this programme undertook local projects to improve processes and flow in the perioperative patient journey. Initiatives undertaken included developing Day of Surgery Admission (DOSAs) units for patients that have reduced the preoperative average length of stay in hospital for scheduled surgical patients. It also led to improved pre-assessment practices to ensure patient readiness on the day of surgery to reduce cancellations. These improvements are now documented best practice in the Models of Care for Elective Surgery and Acute Surgery published by the NCPS and in subsequent surgical speciality Models of Care.

2017-2018

The Theatre Quality Improvement Programme was a collaboration between HSE/NCPA/NCPS and was undertaken in 3 hospitals deploying lean methodology. On site TQIP training and facilitation supported MDT perioperative teams to work together to analyse their perioperative pathway enabling teams to quickly identify opportunities for improving patient flow, while also identifying unutilised theatre capacity through detailed theatre performance diagnostics. Improvements were noted in the 3 sites with local QI projects undertaken such as an increase in theatre utilisation and an increased throughput of patients in pre-admission assessment

2019 to present - Transforming Theatre Programme

The Transforming Theatre Programme is a full Hospital Group theatre improvement initiative where theatre teams from each hospital in a Hospital Group are trained in Lean Methodology and are required to use this methodology to implement change across their perioperative service. The programme uses standardised metrics to capture data on the flow of patients through operating theatres to measure use of the theatre resources across a hospital group. This programme has identified areas of opportunity (untapped capacity) to increase patient throughput and the HG is working with the respective hospitals to plan the best use for this capacity to increase patient access and throughput.

Specific hospital quality improvement initiatives are also underway to improve patient access and flow, such as opening a minor operations (local anaesthetic) facility to increase theatre capacity for operations that require general anaesthesia (right procedure /right place).

The Transforming Theatre programme is aligned with and supports usual hospital governance systems to use the data generated to identify surgical theatre capacity across the Hospital Group and actively assists the Group to increase the throughput of surgical patients.

The initial pilot of the Transforming Theatre Programme is currently 12 months into the planned 18-month programme in the South/South West Hospital Group (SSWHG). As part of the programme all 10 hospitals in the SSWHG have actively deployed lean methodology with 49 operating theatres an array of measures to examine theatre flow, capacity and activity daily, generating a suite of metrics including throughput of surgical patients. It is planned to roll this programme out nationally as funding becomes available.

In addition to these examples of structured programmes taking place under the umbrella of the National Clinical Programmes, there are other quality improvement initiatives taking place across Hospital Groups and within individual hospitals that use components of lean or other quality improvement methodologies methodology.

For example, Ireland East Hospital Group (IEHG) have advised that they are continually involved in service improvement initiatives. IEHG employ Lean Methodologies since 2016 to support the evaluation and improvement of services. This includes patient flow initiatives relevant to surgical patients and is continuous to present day.

Additionally, Saolta Hospital Group have advised that in 2016, the Patient Flow Improvement Team (PFIP), in conjunction with GE, initiated work on the delivery of the National Patient Flow proof of concept and utilised lean methodology to support improvements in flow and throughput. The team initially worked in GUH and subsequently expanded their remit working with other sites across the Saolta Group as project support for the Theatre Utilisation and Optimisation in the Southern Saolta Network project. The team supported many projects in GUH during the years 2016-2020. The following projects were undertaken to support surgical patients utilising lean methodology.

- Transformation of Emergency Surgical Flow (Kaizen), Galway University Hospitals
- Theatre Utilisation Project, GUH/PUH/RUH/MUH. Focus on improving utilisation and throughput in PUH (Kaizen undertaken)
- Model Wards (Surgery), Galway University Hospitals

I trust that this addresses your query,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trish King', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Trish King
General Manager
Acute Operations