



27 October 2021

Deputy Colm Burke
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 48052/21: To ask the Minister for Health if the National Office of Clinical Audit has developed a TARN dataset to collect functional and quality of life outcome data for all components of the major trauma care pathway as recommended in the Trauma Systems for Ireland 2018 report; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Burke

I refer to the above Parliamentary Questions which have been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

The National Trauma Strategy published in February 2018, takes a whole system approach addressing all elements of the trauma care pathway including prevention, pre-hospital care, acute hospital care, rehabilitation and supported discharge.

The strategy recommends the establishment of an inclusive trauma system, where a network of facilities and services co-ordinate the care of injured patients along standardised pathways. International studies have consistently shown that concentrating the care of severely injured patients in dedicated Major Trauma Centres is associated with improved access to care, reduced length of stay and demonstrably better outcomes for patients.

A multi-annual plan to implement the recommendations of the Trauma Strategy has been developed. The plan includes the establishment of two regional trauma networks (Central and South) each with a Major Trauma Centre, a number of Trauma Units and further bypass protocols for the care of patients with traumatic injury.

Work is already underway to implement the recommendations of the National Trauma Strategy, which is expected to take five to seven years. The National Office for Trauma Services works closely with the National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA) regarding data collected as part of the Major Trauma Audit (MTA) to support detailed implementation planning for the establishment of the two regional trauma networks. Over the coming years, the National Office for Trauma Services intends to work with NOCA to expand major trauma patient data collection as part of the MTA. This data will include quality of life outcome data in order to monitor the trauma system's performance and react and prioritise resources appropriately. We sought a statement from NOCA regarding the progress of this.

NOCA stated that the MTA has made recommendations in the last two national reports for the development of longer term outcomes including functional and quality of life outcomes (NOCA, 2020; NOCA 2021). The collection of functional and quality of life outcomes is very resource intensive and challenging as patient records are mainly in paper form. Data for MTA is currently collected in each of the hospitals on the acute hospital episode of care only and is very resource intensive. It is even more challenging to collect data on post-acute care for those with major injuries, older patients with cognitive impairments and children. Improvements could be made on the collection of information with additional resources including the introduction of an Individual Health Identifier (IHI) and the development of electronic patient records.

NOCA is actively engaged in a number of studies to develop an approach for the collection of functional and quality of life outcomes for trauma and other patients. In 2019, NOCA applied for a Health Research Board (HRB) grant entitled "Developing guidance for integration of patient-reported outcomes in national clinical audits" using MTA as the pilot audit. This application was unsuccessful, however in 2020, a grant for the development of longer-term outcomes in the Irish Hip Fracture Database was successful and research has commenced in this regard.

The first publication from this research is available on the HRB website *Walsh, M.E. et al (2021)*. Focus group interviews are currently underway to determine “Barriers and facilitators to collection of long-term outcomes after hip fracture from the perspective of health professionals and researchers”. Learnings from this work will apply to other clinical audits.

More recently, the MTA was awarded a grant for an HRB application entitled Targeted Review and Amalgamation of Unmapped Major trauma and Ambulance data in Ireland: TRAUMA. This work seeks to link existing national datasets with the potential for outcome datasets to also be joined to the MTA in the future. Although this work is in the early stages, it is vitally important to do this correctly and to have the necessary resources in place to ensure it is robust and sustainable. One of the pillars from the NOCA Strategy 2021—2025, due to be published in November 2021, is for improved patient/service user-reported outcomes and experiences across our national audits. The Irish National Orthopaedic Register (INOR) has already embedded patient reported outcome measures within its audit and is due to launch its first report on the 19th November 2021. This will be the first national report from NOCA demonstrating the use of longer term outcome data.

I trust the above information is of assistance to you, however, should you require any further details please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Damian McGovern
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National Office for Trauma Services

Reference: *Walsh, M.E., Cunningham, C., Brent, L., Savin, B., Fitzgerald, M. and Blake, C., (2021)*
“Long-term outcomes after hip fracture in Ireland: a protocol for a systematic review of traditional and grey literature”, <https://hrbopenresearch.org/articles/4-94>