

SATU ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Dr Maeve Eogan and Colleagues

from all 6 SATU sites

June 2022



This summary was developed with on-site SATU clinical staff. Sincere thanks also to all forensic examiners who contribute to the on-call rota, and to all affiliated administrative and support staff.

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Introduction

This is the 13th Annual Report of Key Service Activities from the six HSE funded Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs), 13 years during which the service has continued to grow and develop to respond to people who need to access it. Over that time the service has enhanced the suite of available care options, for example, prior to 2009 we did not routinely provide preventative treatment for infectious diseases, it was often difficult for people to access care if they were not reporting to An Garda Síochána, and we certainly had no facility for storing forensic evidence if people were uncertain about their reporting intentions. So it is important that we acknowledge how far we have come in terms of developing and delivering a responsive and accessible package of care – while continuing to be very ambitious for an even brighter future for a service that will continue to be motivated to provide the very best level of clinical, forensic and supportive care for those who have experienced sexual violence. The SATUs are located in Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Mullingar, Galway and Letterkenny and, in 2021, these units provided care for 859 people who disclosed rape or sexual assault, an increase of almost 15% from 2020. An additional 12 people were cared for in the out-of-hours service at University Hospital Limerick, which has a slightly different structure and funding stream.

We started 2021 full of optimism that the pandemic was receding, that COVID-19 vaccination was going to consign the whole event to our rear view mirror and that we would soon be ‘back to normal’. Sadly we all know how the year evolved! Nevertheless, the work we had done in 2020 to adapt the service to implement secure infection prevention and control policies without compromising access or patient care certainly meant that the operational impact was limited. All SATUs remained operational throughout the year – exceeding the KPI with over 90% of people being seen within 3 hours of a request for forensic examination, when appropriate.

As mentioned in the 2020 report, an unfortunate impact of the pandemic was the ability to routinely offer onsite, face-to-face psychological support at the time of SATU attendance. While RCC volunteers have now returned, and were available for portions of the year – and phone contact was offered if in person support was not present, this was only available to 60% of patients attending SATU. Acute and ongoing psychological support is a critical pillar of the collaborative package of care we offer to everyone who attends SATU and we look forward to ensuring that more people receive this care in 2022. RCC volunteers are an essential part of the sexual assault response team.

SATU Updates

COVID-19 unfortunately continued to impact on implementation of the Department of Health SATU Policy Review. While we were delighted that our various communications initiatives (particularly updates to hse.ie/satu) were now embedded and accessible; various improvements to the patient feedback mechanism and advertising of the services were somewhat delayed. Site visits by the national SATU team were also limited due to COVID-19 numbers and redeployment of HSE (NWIHP) staff meant that implementation of other initiatives and actions were delayed.

We were delighted to begin our SATU staff emotional support pilot in 2021. This programme focusses on reflective practice, wellbeing and emotional support at work and its link to staff development, wellbeing and retention. We now offer a blended programme of some group workshops, but mainly individual, online Professional Therapeutic Spaces to support wellbeing at work with an allied aim to mitigate impact of vicarious trauma and how it may manifest in all aspects of our work and home lives. We look forward to completing, and reviewing, this pilot in 2022 and rolling out a sustained and accessible support service to all SATU staff.

In 2021 we were delighted to embrace the HSE Rainbow Badge initiative in the SATU services. This originated at Evelina London Children's Hospital and in the HSE it was started and championed by HSE Linn Dara CAMHS to promote a positive message of inclusion for LGBTI+ young people, families and colleagues. This 'visual symbol' can make a difference for people who might be unsure of the reception they will receive if they disclose their sexuality and/or gender identity. Wearing a badge does not mean we have all the answers but we are prepared to listen and support, and to signpost relevant agencies and information. These badges carry both a responsibility and an opportunity to send a positive message of inclusion. This sense of belonging supports us all.

We continued to use virtual platforms to have regular team meetings and working groups. Such platforms are a really crucial part of building and maintaining relationships across a national network and between all the agencies, sectors and departments involved in the sexual assault response. It is now so easy for us to meet regularly, have effective committees, troubleshoot operational issues and plan strategies. Even when COVID-19 recedes for good we won't be cancelling our zoom subscriptions!

In terms of capital development, 2021 saw lots of action in Galway in terms of designing and planning their combined adult and paediatric SATU, in conjunction with Barnahus West. This will hopefully open early in 2022 and will be a flagship development which hopefully will be reproduced again in both the East and South of the country. The benefits for patients to be able to access such a holistic, responsive service regardless of age are surely immeasurable.

Cyberhack

Just as we emerged from yet another wave of COVID-19, we were hit by a toxin of a different type! While the HSE Cyberhack had a far greater impact on other aspects of the health service than on SATU (due to our paperbased records), it certainly impacted on efficiency of follow up visits, laboratory orders, data collection, ability to make KPI returns to relevant departments etc. Again thanks to everyone for their perseverance at that time.

SATU Education

We were pleased that an ONMSD funded review entitled 'Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Training for Nurses and Midwives: International Evidence to Inform Future Training in Ireland' was

undertaken and completed in 2021. The aim of this review was to provide evidence to inform and guide the development of high-quality, responsive and coordinated SAFE educational programmes for nurses and midwives. This made a number of educational and organisational recommendations which will inform further development of education for nurses, midwives and doctors interesting in training in this area.

2022 will bring with it another RCSI based SAFE education programme for nurses and midwives, Level 9 QQI (Masters level). On completion of this, an additional cohort of clinical nurse specialists (CNS) will join the SATU team, and we look forward to all they will bring. As with the previous time this course was run, nurses/midwives who wish to train to also deliver care in the paediatric response to sexual violence will complete the programme. Investing in a dedicated, committed and highly expert workforce to provide a skilled response to anyone who has experienced sexual violence regardless of age is so important. Similar to the model for professional development, running blended educational programmes that include doctors, nurses/midwives as well as other members of the sexual assault response team must surely be an ambition for us all.

Unfortunately we were unable to provide the formal programme for forensic medical training this year, although I was delighted to develop an online tutorial with RCPI for trainees in obstetrics and gynaecology, and a number of people spent much time pivoting many of our SATU education packages to online content in order to enhance accessibility. While we will be able to offer in-person training for forensic medical examiners in 2022, the suite of online resources makes the training more accessible and limits the required duration of prescribed in person training in order to achieve all the relevant competencies required, and the benefits of this will be felt by all in the future. Thanks, in particular, to Dr Andrea Holmes, clinical lead for the Galway SATU for tirelessly working on this significant project.

Many thanks to Sarah O'Connor for her commitment to coordinating a comprehensive professional development programme for the SATU services, and we look forward to many more excellent learning opportunities in this context. We were delighted to be invited to run a webinar on the Irish services for the UK FFLM on the Irish Sexual Assault Response, which remains accessible through their website.

Annual Study Day

This year's (13th annual) interagency study day took place in October 2021. Early in the year we hoped it would be an in-person meeting, but as time went on we realised that, for yet another year, an interactive webinar format was the only option. This year it was run by Margo Noonan, Louise Tiernan and Sinead Maher, with the assistance of Sarah O'Connor, from the Cork SATU.

Speakers and presentations were varied and incredibly engaging – this year's day focussed on many aspects of the service, but particularly on the fact that endeavours to address the prevalence of, and response to sexual violence, need a whole of society approach. It was particularly interesting to hear about the Sexual Violence Framework at UCC and the West Cork Sexual Violence Support Services. As with last

year, while the webinar based format was excellent for information sharing, we certainly missed our traditional opportunities for interagency networking. We are delighted that a ringfenced budget for this event is now included in the annual SATU budget.

Thanks and Acknowledgments

As always, I would like to take this opportunity to thank every member of the SATU team. This report of key service activity is only possible because of the commitment to collation and inputting of relevant data into the database to ensure accurate presentation of service activities and key performance indicators. While we aim to input data on each SATU attendance into the database within 10 days of attendance, the Cyberhack in May denied us access to the database for 6 months – many thanks to those who assisted with retrospective data inputting in order that we could prepare this report. Thanks again to Connie McGilloway, ANP in the Donegal SATU, who has been the clinical lead on the database project from its inception and continues to provide a clinical interface between the SATUs and the project team to ensure that IT problems & challenges are identified and resolved promptly. Also thanks to Mark Kerins (Graphic Designer) and Zara Molphy from the Rotunda/RCSI Research Department who have provided additional support in collating and presenting this report.

I would also like to thank a number of key personnel within the Health Service Executive, including Killian McGrane, Ann Donovan, Claire Plunkett and Davinia O'Donnell (NWIHP). Tanya King in the Department of Health has also been a great support. Their commitment to SATU services despite multiple demands on their time and resources is greatly appreciated. I acknowledge the support we receive from Masters, Clinical Directors, Directors of Midwifery/Nursing and hospital & network managers who advocate for us despite frequent, competing and important demands on their valuable resources.

As always, it is important to acknowledge the people who attend SATUs around the country. Nobody ever 'wants' to attend a SATU and we never cease to be amazed by the strength that our service users display, despite significance of the events they have experienced. We really value the feedback that they provide, in order that we can critically appraise our service through the lens of a service user. This underpins continuous quality improvement, and is really valuable in informing ongoing staffing and infrastructural developments.

Please contact me directly, or via satu@rotunda.ie, if you have any questions or comments on this Executive Summary of Key Service Activity.



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SATU

Key Service Activity

2021



Attendance in Each SATU 2021

Opening Remarks

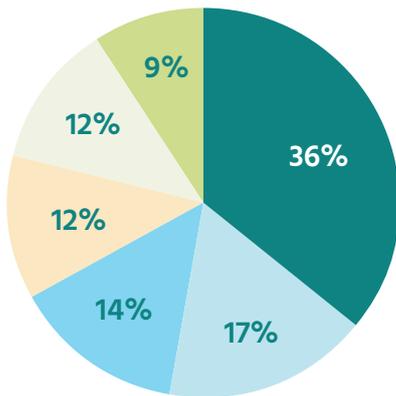
There were **859 patients** at the **6 SATUs in the Republic of Ireland in 2021**, an increase of **127 from 2020** (when **732 patients** attended). This is a **17% increase**.

SATU Locations 2021



- | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Cork SATU | 5 | Mullingar SATU |
| 2 | Donegal SATU | 6 | Waterford SATU |
| 3 | Dublin SATU | | |
| 4 | Galway SATU | | |

758 (88%) of incidents occurred in the Republic of Ireland with **the greatest number of these incidents occurring in Dublin (36%)**.



- 309 Rotunda Hospital Dublin
- 148 South Infirmery Victoria University Hospital Cork
- 120 Midlands Regional Hospital Mullingar
- 100 Galway University Hospital
- 101 Letterkenny University Hospital
- 81 Waterford Regional University Hospital

Total: 859



60% (484) of patients had the opportunity to speak with a Psychological Support Worker at the first SATU visit

When appropriate, 93% (503) of patients were seen by a Forensic Clinical Examiner within 3 hours of a request for Forensic Clinical Examination

Time and Day of Attendance

October 2021						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

SUN **MON** TUE WED THUR FRI SAT

Monday was the busiest day of the week and **October** was the busiest month.



While the majority of the patients were seen between 8am and 8pm, **32% attended at night which underpins the importance for round the clock service.**

Details of Incident



668 (78%) of patients attended for SATU care **within 7 days** of the incident.



94% of assaults were by a **single assailant**, with **5%** committed by **multiple assailants**.

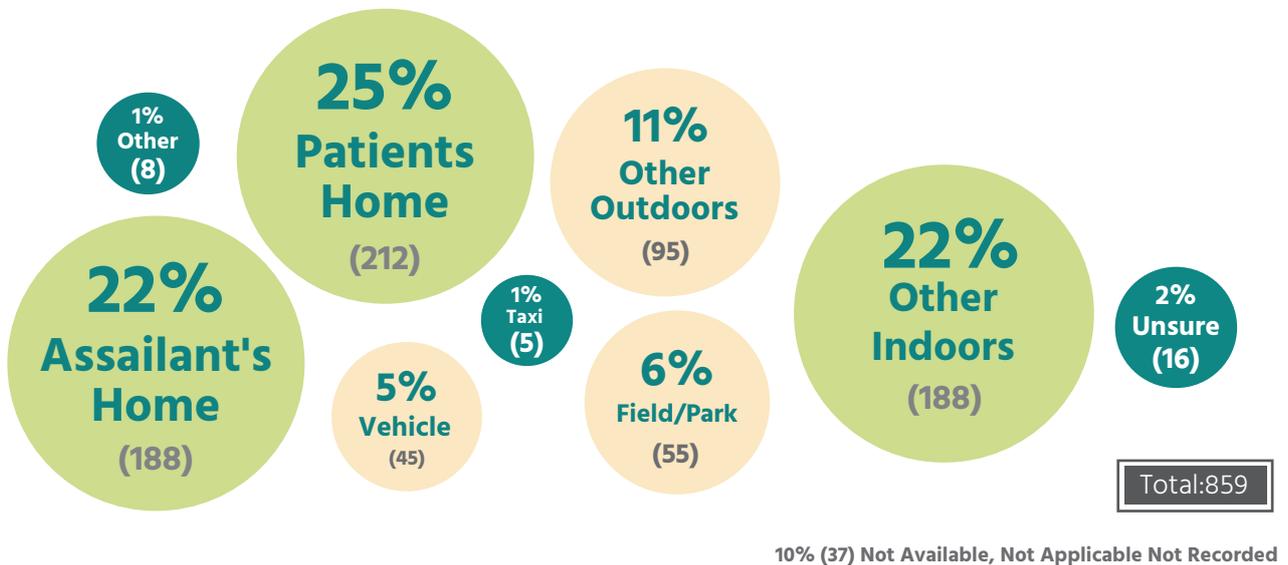


Out of **859** reported incidents, **69%** occurred **indoors** with **22%** being in the **assailant's home** and **25%** being in the **patient's home**.

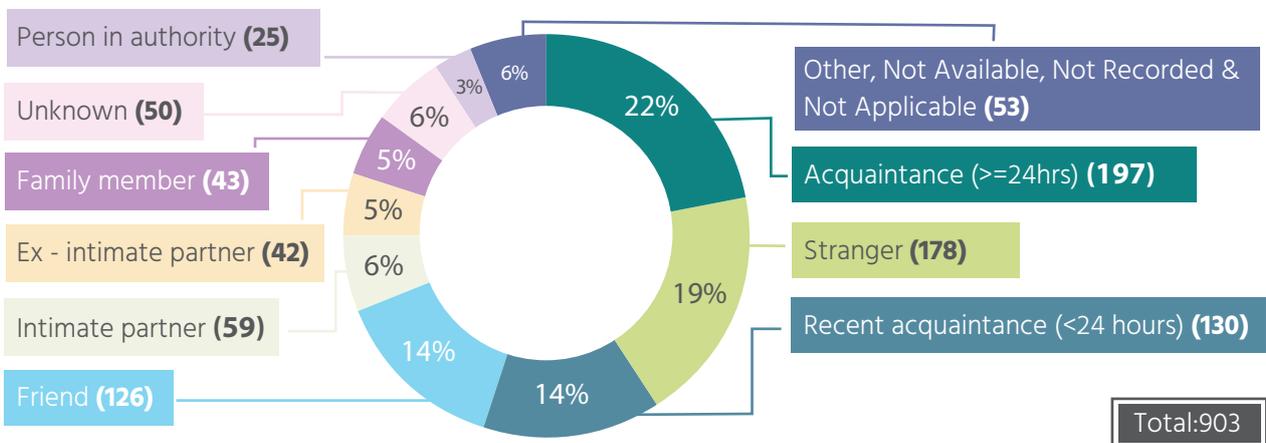
'308 (34%) of **903 perpetrators** were described as a **'stranger'** or **'recent acquaintance'**, **169 (19%)** as a **'friend'** or **'family member'**. **101 (11%)** were described as an **intimate (or ex-intimate) partner**.

Physical restraint was used in **216 (25%)** of incidents and use of weapons (gun/knife/other) was disclosed in **61 (7%)** of cases

Location of Incident



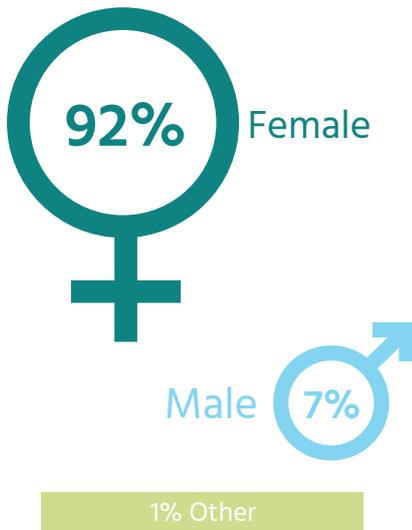
Assailant's details i.e. relationship to victim



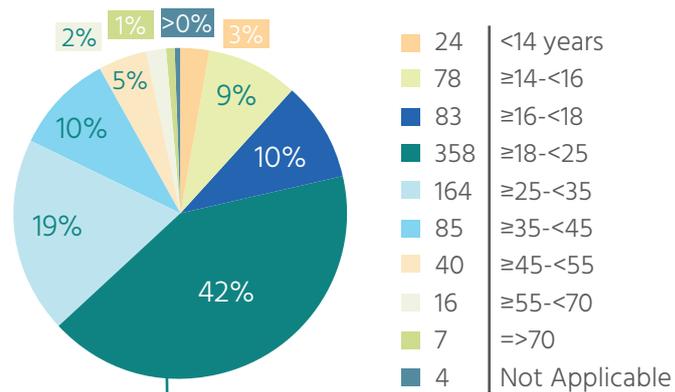
108 (13%) were unsure if sexual assault had occurred.

Gender, Age, Nationality, Referral Source

Gender



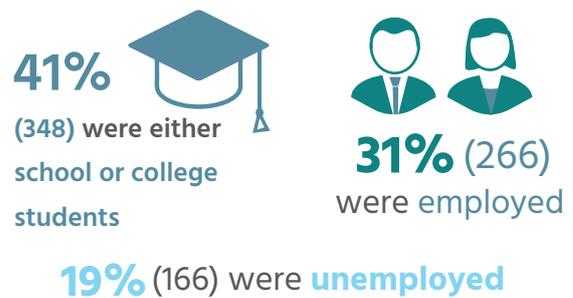
Age



The mean age was **26 years**

The age of people attending <14 years (24 people) to over 70 years (7 people)

Nationality



Referral Source



Patients Reporting the Incident to An Garda Síochána/ Interval from Incident till SATU



- **580 (67%)** patients reported the incident to **An Garda Síochána**.
- The majority reported to the SATU within 3 days of the incident. **291 (50%)** reported the incident **within 24 hours** and **152 (26%)** reported the assault **between 24-72 hours**.



- **120 (14%) patients** opted to securely store their forensic evidence in SATU to give them an option to report the incident and have this forensic evidence released. **84 (70%)** of these people attended SATU **within 72 hours** of the incident.

Alcohol and Drug Use



361 (42%) had consumed **more than 6 standard drinks**



156 (18%) had consumed **6 or less standard drinks**

267 (31%) had consumed **no alcohol**, in the 24 hours prior to the incident.



When recorded, **638 (74%) had not taken any drugs**, **131 (15%) had taken recreational drugs** and **18 (2%) had taken both recreational and prescription drugs**, in the 24 hours prior to the incident.

128 (15%) were concerned that drugs (including alcohol) had been used to facilitate sexual assault.

Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Prophylaxis



284 of female patients **received emergency contraception (EC)**. EC was not indicated in the remainder for a range of reasons including age, pre-existing effective contraceptive and patient preference.

All units offer Chlamydia prophylaxis, Hepatitis B vaccination and risk assessment for HIV postexposure prophylaxis (PEPSE) at time of SATU attendance. **56% of patients received Chlamydia prophylaxis**, **44% commenced a Hepatitis B immunisation programme** and **6% started postexposure prophylaxis for HIV**.

STI Screening



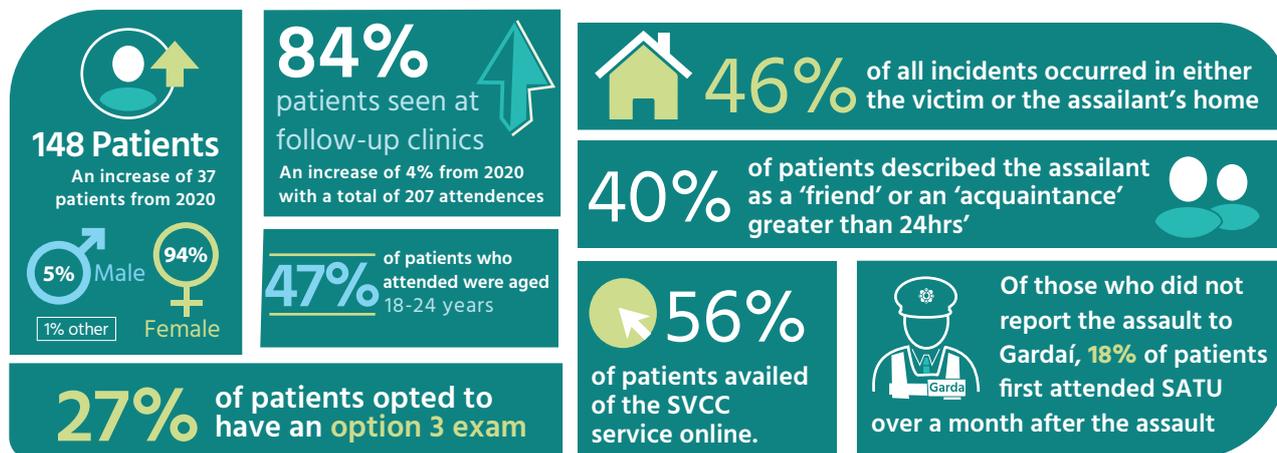
- **663 (78%)** either **had an STI screen** at their first attendance or **were offered an appointment for STI follow up**.
- **344 (77%)** of those given a follow up appointment attended for follow-up STI screening which means **319** did not return for their screen. It is important to highlight the importance of offering prophylaxis at the time of initial attendance to reduce the long term health effects of sexual violence.

Updates from Each **Sexual Assault Treatment Unit** Service in Ireland



The Key Message

In 2021, the Cork SATU developed and commenced its first community outreach clinic in the Marino Medical Centre in Bantry. SATU staff introduced the CHI rainbow initiative to their National SATU colleagues and staff within the SIVUH.



The reduction of some COVID-19 restrictions enabled us to at long last commence our plans for bringing healthcare to our more vulnerable clients, those that live in rural areas or find the means to travel difficult or even the psychological difficulty of re-attending the SATU. The new once a month outreach clinic in the Marino Medical Centre Bantry, is for those clients who initially attended the SATU and wish to complete their follow up care nearer to home. The success of this clinic led us to commence plans for a clinic in UCC and Kilarney. These outreach clinics enable our patients to receive all necessary healthcare and receive ongoing support. Continuing the theme of inclusivity the SATU staff introduced the CHI rainbow initiative to their National SATU colleagues and staff within the SIVUH. The Rainbow badge initiative gives staff a way to show that the SATU and the SIVUH offers open, non-judgemental and inclusive care for patients, staff and their families who identify as LGBTI+. The initiative aims to make a positive difference by promoting a message of inclusion. The initiative is a way for staff to demonstrate that they are aware of issues that LGBTI+ people can face when accessing healthcare. The badge itself is intended to be a simple visual symbol identifying the wearer as someone an LGBTI+ person can feel comfortable talking to about issues relating to gender identity or sexuality. It shows that the wearer is there to listen without judgement and signpost further support if needed.

Cork SATU has seen 148 new attendances in 2021; an increase of 37 patients from 2020. 94% (n=139) of those who attended identified as female, 5% (n=8) identified as male and one patient identified as other. 84% of these patients attended SATU follow up care clinics, an increase of 4% from 2020 with a total of 207 attendances. Not only do follow up clinics provide patients with the opportunity to discuss their experiences in a safe environment aiding to reduce the overall psychological burden of sexual violence, but it is pivotal in ensuring the medical needs of victims are addressed. Furthermore, there were 179 referrals (See Table 1) made by SATU staff to other services at the time of a patient's first attendance, with 2% of patients requiring emergency department referral and a further 2% referred to mental health services; these figures remain similar to what we have seen in the years previous and highlight the importance of providing holistic services to patients as a method of improving long term health outcomes.

While sexual assault can occur at any age, 2021 saw the age profile of patients attending our service change again. In 2021, 47% of patients who attended were aged 18-24 years, compared to 33% in this age category in 2020. Less than 18 years in 2020 was 25% of all cases which dropped to 15% in 2021. Additionally, 37% of

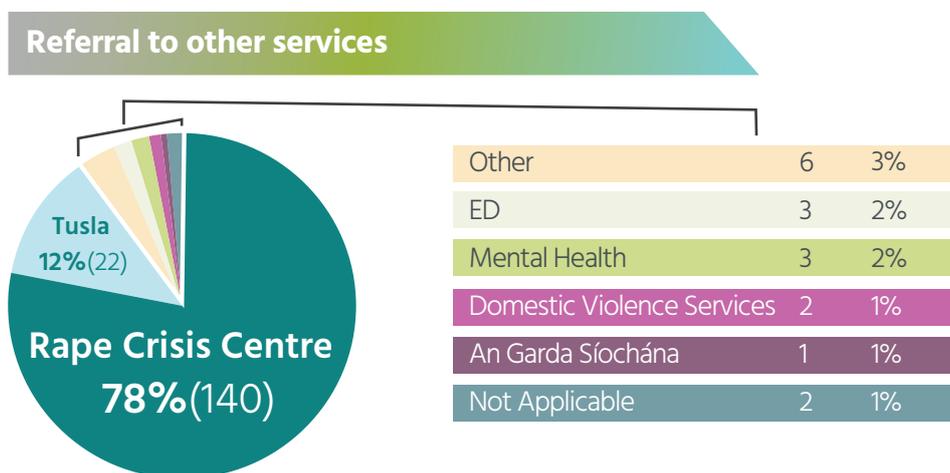
patients in 2021 were aged 35 years or older compared to 23% in 2020. Furthermore, 4% of patients who attended in 2021 were aged between 55-70 years, with 1% of patients that were seen were over the age of 70 in 2021.

Cork SATU witnessed a decrease in the volume of patients referred to the service by An Garda Síochána in 2021, at 47% (71 of 148) versus 56% (62 of 111). In the cases where there was no involvement by An Garda Síochána 77 cases (52%), 18% of these were over a month after the incident before presenting to SATU. In 2021, we have noticed an increase in the uptake of patients choosing Option 3. This has increased from 21% in 2019, to 23% in 2020 and to 27% (40) in 2021. Of patients who had made a decision about their samples, in 2021 10% (4) of the cases were reported and have had their samples collected by the Gardaí.

Unfortunately throughout 2021 COVID-19 remained a real barrier for face to face meetings with the psychological support services; SVCC psychological support workers were not in a position to attend the SATU in person to meet patients. While phone contact was established in 2020, in 2021, only 56% of patients availed of the service with 41% of patients declining the service at their initial attendance to SATU. Contact information was provided to all patients attending SATU.

This years (13th annual) interagency study day for those involved in SATU care provision took place in October 2021, and for the first time, Cork Sexual Assault Treatment Unit held the privilege and pleasure of being the hosts for the event. We used an interactive webinar format and welcomed a total of over 500 attendees from a wide range of specialities, including medical, nursing and also our colleagues in An Garda Síochána, the Department of Public Prosecutions, Public Health, Tusla, Rape Crisis Network Ireland and Forensic Science Ireland to name a few. Margo Noonan, Sinead Maher, Louise Tiernan and Angela Brosnan excelled as organisers and coordinators of this endeavour and their commitment and efficiency resulted in an informative, thought provoking event which created opportunities to develop interagency relationships and identify areas for future research, with the victim consistently at the centre of the agenda. While feedback from the event was extremely positive, we do look forward to the reintroduction of in person attendance at this event in the future.

In 2021, Margo Noonan completed her Masters in Advanced Practice Nursing and registered as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Sexual Assault Forensic Examination followed by Fellowship of the Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery in the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland. We welcomed two new Forensic Examiners, Dr. Barbara Burke and Dr. Rebecca Hunter. We also welcomed Angela Brosnan who joined the team as a full time administrator. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all SATU staff, with special mention to the our support nurses, Forensic examiners, local management and hospital staff in the South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital, and Dr. John Coulter Medical Director of SATU. The continued commitment, support and dedication shown to the unit and our patients does not go unnoticed.



Galway

The Key Message

Galway SATU finds a permanent home in purpose-designed premises, co-located with Barnahus West.



All members of the Galway SATU and Child and Adolescent Sexual Assault Treatment Service (CASATS) team contributed to the design of the new Willow Centre which is co-located with Barnahus West.



With the help of Community Gardaí, stickers informing on SATU services were distributed on bathroom doors at bars and venues throughout the West and Mid-West region.



2021 began disappointingly with the third wave of COVID-19 but optimistically with the rollout of the first vaccines. SATU services continued to be curtailed through lockdowns and staff shared their skills with the ongoing COVID-19 effort on the main hospital site. Despite this, three of the Galway SATU CNSs still found time to study for, and achieve their SANE-P paediatric qualifications.

In September 2021, Dr Roger Derham, who has contributed greatly to the adult and paediatric service in Galway as a Forensic Examiner since 2009, retired from clinical practice. Roger has helped countless patients throughout his career, and been a mentor and teacher to many Forensic Physicians and Nurses. We would like to express our gratitude for his teaching, support, enthusiasm and many diverse talents and wish him well in his future endeavours.

A large part of the non-clinical work for 2021 was the design for the permanent Willow Centre, to be co-located in an off-hospital site with Barnahus West. Barnahus West incorporates services from An Garda Síochána, Tusla and HSE for under 18s who have experienced sexual abuse “under one roof”. Working with our interagency partners and the very talented Edel Tobin and her team from Simon J Kelly Architects, SATU and CASATS staff spent many hours considering the layout, function and feel for the new Forensic Medical area.

Throughout the planning and design stages, the patient’s journey through the unit remained the central focus with due consideration of their comfort, confidentiality and privacy. Patients attending the Willow Centre have a separate dedicated entrance with reserved parking at the entrance. The waiting area in Willow offers a welcoming and warm environment aiming to create a tranquil, homely space for our patients.

When planning the clinical areas, we were able to facilitate two separate forensic “pods”, each with a separate interview and examination room. One pod is designated for children and has cheerful furniture with animal motifs. The second pod is decorated more neutrally for adults and adolescents. A bathroom with shower is available with direct and exclusive access from the forensic examination rooms.

A separate non-forensic clinical room means follow-up care can occur in a different environment, so now our returning patients are not re-exposed to the room in which they had their forensic examination, potentially minimising re-traumatisation.

The design team gave high priority to security and safe-keeping of patient information and Option 3 samples and a secure room is built in to the nursing team office, with high levels of security throughout Willow and Barnahus West. Administrative, medical and nursing staff are delighted to have dedicated office spaces and we share kitchen and conference room facilities with our Barnahus West colleagues which makes for great inter-agency collaboration.

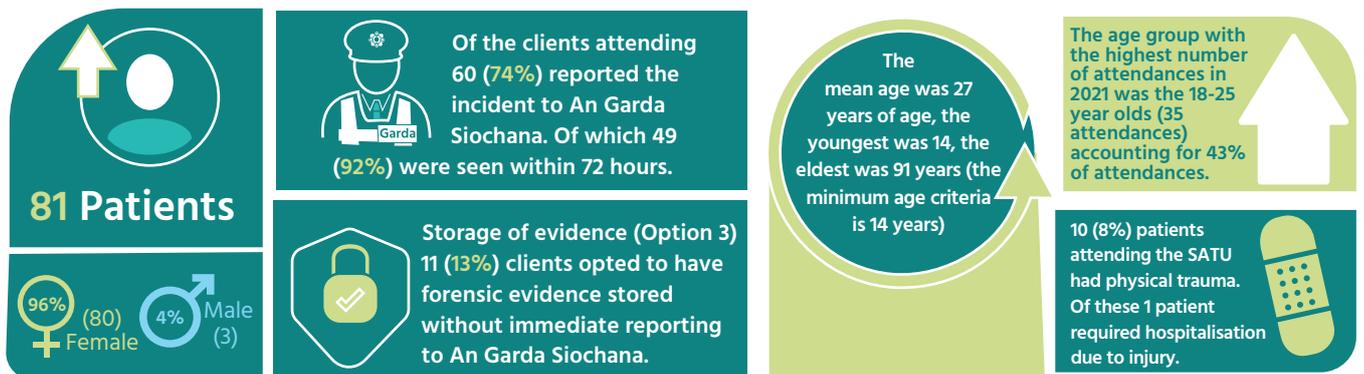
Most importantly, the new Willow Centre is an easily accessible, discreet and pleasant space for our patients where we hope they will get the care they need and begin to heal. See photos below.



University Hospital Waterford

The Key Message

- A new infectious disease consultant has been appointed at UHW. Patients commenced on HIV PEPSE are now seen locally which has a significant impact, they no longer have to travel to Dublin or Cork.
- SATU at UHW saw an increase in activity up 6% from the previous year in 2020.
- An ANP post was approved for SATU. One CNS was successful at interview and has now commenced the masters in advanced practice.
- Training of one additional forensic examiner has commenced.



2021 Updates

Refurbishment works of the SATU at UHW have still not commenced. Social distancing measures last year have highlighted the need for a larger clinical area to allow for social distancing. Patient feedback has reiterated the need for a second examination room (for follow up appointments) in order to improve patient experience. A permanent and more suitable premises is under consideration by the General Manager.

- The CNM2 post remains unfilled.
- The administration post is currently with recruitment awaiting appointment of a suitable candidate.
- Training and education in 2021 was predominantly online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Medical director and Clinical nurse specialists and on call nurses completed a wide range of online training and virtually attended webinars locally, nationally and internationally on a variety of relevant topics.
- New volunteers with the Rape crisis centre have commenced training and have been orientated to the SATU.
- Rape crises volunteers have now resumed in person attendance at SATU for presenting cases.

Key Service Activity

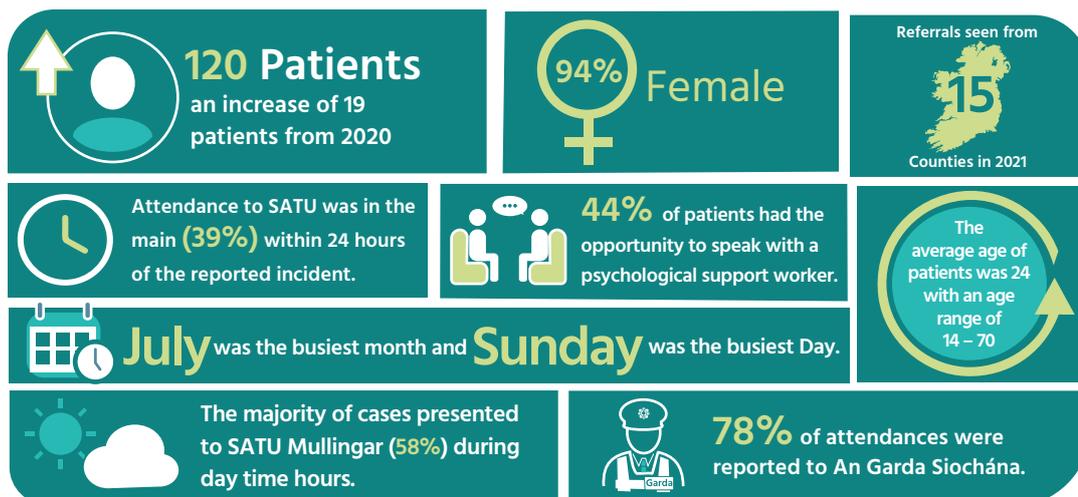
There were 81 new attendances at the SATU in UHW in 2021 an increase of 5 (6%) from 2020. Of the clients attending 60 (74%) reported the incident to An Garda Síochána. Of which 49 (92%) were seen within 72 hours. Storage of evidence (Option 3) 11 (13%) clients opted to have forensic evidence stored without immediate reporting to An Garda Síochána. 80 (96%) patients were female and 3 (4%) of patients were male. The mean age was 27 years of age, the youngest was 14, the eldest was 91 years (the minimum age criteria is 14 years). The age group accounting for the highest number of attendances was 18-25 years with 20 (28%) of patients attending. The age group with the highest number of attendances in 2021 was the 18-25 year olds (35 attendances) accounting for 43% of attendances. 10 (8%) patients attending the SATU had physical trauma. Of these 1 patient required hospitalisation due to injury.

We wish to thank and acknowledge all the hard work and effort by everyone involved with the provision of services at the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) UHW including Dr. Bermingham (Medical Director), Paula Curtin (Director of Midwifery), Nursing Management, all the Forensic Examiners, Assisting Nurses and Support Workers from the Waterford Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre.

Mullingar

The Key Message

Always responsive to patient need the SATU in Mullingar has had a concentrated focus on the provision of outreach services for those patients who may have for whatever reason difficulty in attending the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit. This successful initiative has led to increased patient satisfaction and greater attendance at follow up appointments. Given the large geographical area that SATU Mullingar covers outreach clinics are provided in Portlaoise, Monaghan, Longford and Cavan and other areas as needed. A successful outreach service is also provided to Technological University of the Shannon on a needs basis.



Key Metrics

78% of attendances were reported to An Garda Síochána. A number of cases were reported to An Garda Síochána but did not undergo forensic clinical examination which recognises the additional services provided by SATU including injury mapping and healthcare needs as well as the supports that the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit provides and the benefit that this provides in the investigation of sexual violence.

Referrals to SATU Mullingar came from 15 counties in 2021 which is in line with other years and is reflective of the wide geographical area where SATU Mullingar provides care. This was a significant driver in the provision of outreach care to our patients and the addition of an extra staff member in 2022 will help to further develop the SATU outreach services.

67% of patients attended for follow up care this is an increase on 2019 figures and is reflective of the focus on the provision of outreach services which is serving to provide our patients with the holistic care that is so important following sexual violence.

44% of patients had the opportunity to speak with a psychological support worker. This is a direct impact of COVID restrictions. Throughout COVID restrictions we have found innovative solutions to the provision of psychological support to our patients including Zoom Calls, Telephone Support and face to face visits at follow up appointments. We are very grateful to our colleagues in Tullamore and Athlone Rape Crisis Centre for helping and engaging with us to ensure that all our patients if they wish can avail of support from RCC.

Summary

Nessa Gill has registered as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner Sexual Assault Forensic Examination further contributing to the development of SATU services in the Midlands. She will take up post as a Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioner SAFE in 2022.

On-going Education and training is supported with Catherine Marsh undertaking a Certificate in Advanced Practice UCD and Nessa Gill undertaking Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Abuse – TCD and Certificate in Ionising Radiation – TCD. This on-going commitment by the management and staff of SATU RHM to continuous professional development highlights the forward thinking and innovative approach that is SATU RHM.

Catherine Marsh continues to develop and deliver a Schools program which is proving very beneficial. We continued to provide education and training to Student Nurses and Midwives and other professional bodies both in person and via online forums.

Recruitment of a further Clinical Nurse Specialist was successful in 2021 and Clare Mahon will return to Ireland to join the SATU Mullingar Team in early 2022. Clare, a very experienced Forensic Clinical Examiner had previously worked as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in SATU Galway and the UK and we are delighted that she will bring her knowledge and expertise to share with us in Mullingar.

Peer review of SATU charts and a monthly meeting of Forensic Clinical Examiners continued in 2021 on a monthly basis with Forensic Clinical Examiners sharing knowledge and experience. This focus on continuous engagement and learning has fostered engagement, encouraged staff and supported each other which are so important working in what needs to be recognised as an at times difficult area.

We were fortunate to welcome Dr Roswitha Junold Martin back to SATU as a Forensic Clinical Examiner after a brief hiatus. As one of the original team from the opening of SATU Dr Junold Martin brings a depth of knowledge and experience which ourselves and our patients derive great benefit from. We also welcomed Support Nurses Breda Ward and Sarah Connaire to SATU in 2021. Together with Forensic Clinical Examiners Barbara Hynes, Charlotte Coyle, Catherine Marsh and Nessa Gill and Sarah O Connor who fulfils a "Rapid Responder" role in SATU RHM, Support Nurses Elizabeth O Grady Brennan, Patricia Smith, Edel Shannon, Marie McDonnell, Stacey Egan, Marie Corbett provide a full complement of staff which has meant that there have been very few times where other SAT U units are requested to provide cover.

2020 saw two of our Support Nurses step away from SATU work. Mary Cleary and Shirley Martin two invaluable staff members who have brought years of kindness and compassion to all of us, both staff and patients have left our service. We were lucky to have worked with both for so long.

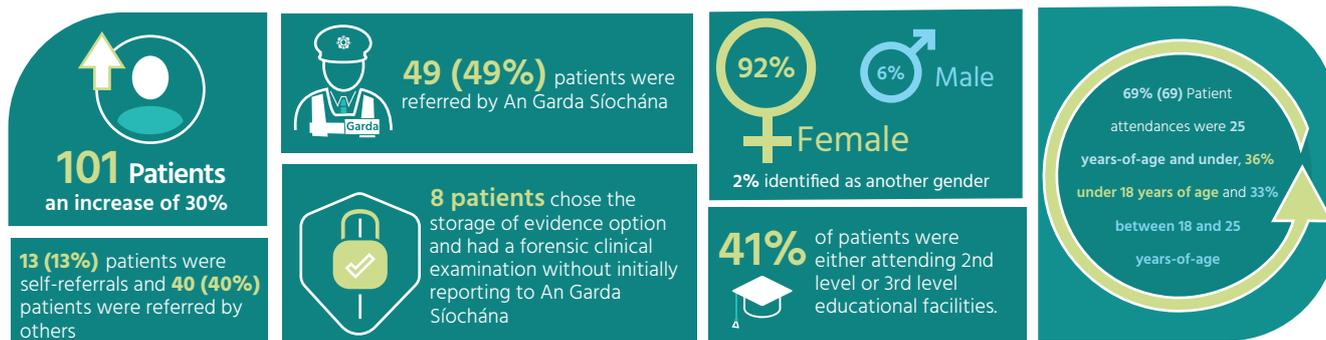
Our longstanding and committed staff member Moya Doran Moore retired in November 2021. Moya had worked for many years as our administrative support. A creative, innovative and frankly wonderful individual, Moya along with her job sharing partner, Irene formed the backbone of SATU Mullingar. To say we will miss her is an understatement. We wish her well in all her future plans and endeavours.

SATU Mullingar is supported by the entire staff of Regional Hospital Mullingar and we would like to recognise the quiet support given to us (to name but a few) by the Laboratory, Pharmacy, Hospital Management, Nursing Administration and departments of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Emergency, and Surgical. Community services also never hesitate to help us when required. We are very grateful for your help.

Donegal

The Key Message

Despite the challenges of the past couple of years, the Donegal SATU continued to provide 24-hour-unbroken trauma-informed care in a time-sensitive manner to individuals who experienced sexual assault and rape. In addition, we have adapted to new methods of communication and interagency collaboration. We have embraced and continue to engage in the use of audio and visual technologies not only to enhance our continuing professional development but to enable us to reach a wider audience through blended mediums for training and education.



In 2021, 101 patients attended the Donegal SATU. This was an increase of 30% on patient attendances compared to 2020. 92% (n=93) identified as female, 6% (n=6) male and 2% (n=2) identified as another gender. The age profile of patients attending the Donegal SATU was comparative to previous years with a mean age of 25 years. 69 (69%) patient attendances were 25 years-of-age and under, 36% under 18 years of age and 33% between 18 and 25 years-of-age. 41% of patients were either attending 2nd level or 3rd level educational facilities.

49 (49%) patients were referred by An Garda Síochána. However, an additional 23 (23%) patients who attended SATU and had not previously reported the incident to An Garda Síochána went on to report the incident following SATU support. 8 patients chose the storage of evidence option and had a forensic clinical examination without initially reporting to An Garda Síochána. 3 (38%) of these patients subsequently reported their assault to An Garda Síochána. This emphasises the importance of allowing people to pause and deliberate on whether or not they want to engage in the criminal justice system, whilst at the same time receive both physical and psychological trauma informed holistic care. 13 (13%) patients were self-referrals and 40 (40%) patients were referred by others; Donegal Rape Crisis Centre, Donegal Womens Domestic Violence Services, Addiction Services, Mental Health Services, Acute Hospitals and 3rd level student services. A trend highlighted since the beginning of the pandemic has been the reduction in referrals from General Practice. Prior to the pandemic 15-20% of all referrals to the Donegal SATU came from General Practitioners. However, over the past two years only 4% of patient referrals have come from General Practitioners. It is anticipated that when General Practice returns to normal opening this will once again be reflected in patient referrals.

93 (92%) incidents were reported to have occurred in Ireland. Of these, 87 (86%) occurred in Donegal, Sligo and north Leitrim. 78% of patients attended the SATU within 7 days of the reported incident and 97% of patients who underwent a forensic clinical examination were seen by a forensic clinical examiner within 3 hours of a request.

Follow-up care after the initial visit continued to remain high with 97% of patients attending 1st follow-up appointments. In addition, acknowledging that women who have experienced sexual violence are reluctant to

partake in cervical screening programmes, the Donegal SATU commenced an opportunistic cervical screening programme in 2017 under the governance of Letterkenny University Hospital and the National Cervical Screening Programme (NSCP). Women 25-years-and-over who had previously not accessed the national cervical screening programme, were delayed in accessing the programme or were unlikely to avail of the programme due to a history of sexual violence are offered a cervical screen at their follow-up appointment. Between 2017 and 2021, 25 patients availed of this programme. Of these, 24% were referred on to colposcopy and gynaecology services for further investigations and assessment. The importance of this opportunistic cervical screening programme not only supports trauma-informed care but recognises the importance of trauma informed care in reducing the risk of cervical cancer. In addition, patient feedback throughout the years has suggested patient-centred appointment time flexibility and the provision of satellite clinics are a contributing factor to high attendances at the Donegal SATU follow-up clinics.

There have been great strides to improve staffing levels within the Donegal SATU during the year. The service welcomed Ms Deborah Marshall, ANP in Sexual Health and an experienced Forensic Clinical Examiner to the Forensic Examiner team in July 2021. Deborah has been a great addition to the SATU in the northwest and the on-call cover she provided during the year was a welcome respite for the team. We also welcomed Ms Sharon Curran in December 2021. Sharon commenced working as the new SATU Administrator. With many years of experience working in key areas within the HSE and TUSLA, Sharon skills will enhance processes within the SATU service. The Donegal SATU has a special interest in ensuring an equitable quality service for all and in early 2021 led out on a national study regarding patients attending SATUs with mental health vulnerabilities, Connie Mc Gilloway RANP presented the study at the International Conference on Survivors of Rape. Connie is also leading out on a national project in improving access to the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit through the use of Irish Sign Language (ISL) for members of the Irish Deaf Community. This project is being implemented in collaboration of An Garda Síochána, the Donegal and Dublin Rape Crisis Centres, CHIME, the Deaf Society of Ireland, Trinity College Dublin and Justisigns. It is anticipated that the project will be completed by the 2nd quarter of 2022.

Mid West Forensic Medical Examination Service (Limerick)

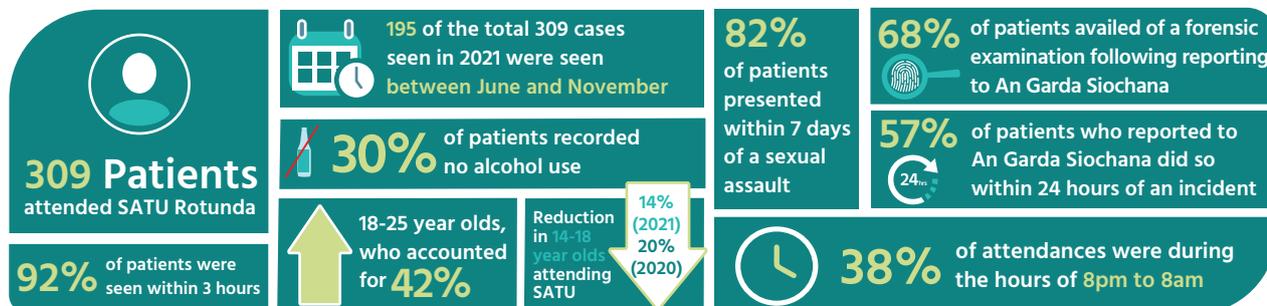
The Mid West Forensic Medical Examination Service (FME) was established in 2006 and provides a comprehensive Forensic Medical Examination Service. This service is open to both male and female people aged 14 years and upward who have experienced rape or sexual assault and area referred by An Garda Síochána. This is an Out of Hours Service Monday to Friday 6pm to 8am and 24 hours over weekends and Public Holidays, with on call commitment being provided by Eight Forensic Clinical Examiners (General Practitioners) through Shannondoc. The service is delivered from a clinical room at University Hospital Limerick and provided care for 12 people in 2021 (all women) a decrease from 24 in 2020, with an age range of 19 to 47.

Limerick Rape Crisis Network volunteers are specifically trained to attend at forensic medical examinations with victims and their family/friend and attended approximately 75% of these examinations in 2021.

Dublin (Rotunda)

The Key Message

2021 saw an increase in patients attending SATU Rotunda from 2020. Despite significant temporary staffing constraints, 92% of patients were seen within 3 hours of a request to SATU.



2021 proved a challenging year due to temporary staffing reductions and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However adaptations made during the previous year allowed us to continue to provide ongoing sensitive, individualized care to our patients while maintaining a safe environment. We noted in 2020 that social restrictions did not remove sexual violence from society and that significant numbers of people continued to attend our service.

In 2021, a total of 309 patients attended the SATU Rotunda where trends very much followed the social restriction timeline. When the country began easing restrictions in June 2021, this coincided with a noticeable rise in attendance at SATU. 195 of the total 309 cases seen in 2021 were seen between June and November. With caution around the Omicron variant in December and a significant increase in COVID-19 cases in Ireland, attendance at our SATU began to fall again.

This pattern of attendance however, was not associated with an overall change in concern regarding drug facilitated assault or a change in alcohol or drug use compared to previous years. Indeed 30% of patients recorded no alcohol use. This dispels the myth that sexual assault is solely attributed to alcohol and drug use.

82% of patients presented within 7 days of a sexual assault and 68% of patients availed of a forensic examination following reporting to An Garda Siochana. 57% of patients who reported to An Garda Siochana did so within 24 hours of an incident. 38% of attendances were during the hours of 8pm to 8am. Despite significant temporary staffing constraints 92% of patients were seen within 3 hours of a request to SATU. In addition to our core SATU team, the on call team of forensic examiners and assisting nurses once again provided dedicated round the clock service for our patients and deserve special mention and thanks.

An increase in attendance was noted particularly amongst 18-25 year olds, who accounted for 42% of attendees during 2021. Conversely a reduction in 14-18 year olds attending SATU was observed (14% versus 20% in 2020). There has been a change in trend amongst attendance from 3rd level students which accounted for 16% in 2019, fell to 12% in 2020 and rose to 21% in 2021. 15% of patients attending SATU reported concerns regarding drug facilitated sexual assault, a reduction from 24% in 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the availability of crisis volunteer's attendance to the SATU. None the less RCC and ASSC volunteer attendance noticeably increased towards the latter parts of 2021 and our clinical midwife manager Noelle Farrell provided introductory training to new volunteers.

This year we said goodbye to our longstanding administration assistant Rita O'Connor and welcomed a new member to our SATU team Denise Rogers. We wish Rita a long happy healthy retirement and are delighted to welcome Denise to our team at the Rotunda. Outreach education to schools was limited somewhat by pandemic restrictions. We look forward to restarting this in 2022 and have expanded our reach to other healthcare facilities and emergency departments to increase awareness of our sexual assault treatment options.

We welcomed the introduction of staff psychological support on a national basis. We look forward to being able to offer our full service and supports for patients during 2022 and after a challenging two years of COVID-19 times.



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



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