Hip and Knee referrals are the most common GP referral to the Musculoskeletal (MSK) Triage service in Tallaght hospital. Between 2012-2014 (Knee: 32%; Hip: 12%). 74% of patients with hip and knee pathology were discharged at their MSK Triage clinic visit and 59% were referred to physiotherapy. Therefore, the need for these patients to be referred to secondary care is questionable. Physiotherapy is recommended for non-traumatic hip and knee pathology prior to considering invasive intervention1-5

**Recommended Pathway to access Orthopaedic and Rheumatology Services in Tallaght Hospital**

1. **Patient with non-traumatic Hip/Knee Symptoms**
   - Red flags?
     - no
     - yes
   - Has patient previously attended physiotherapy?
     - yes
     - no
   - Has patient responded to course of physiotherapy?
     - yes
     - no

2. **PCCC Physiotherapy**
   - Patient responds to treatment
     - yes
     - no

3. **Musculoskeletal Triage Clinic**
   - Rapid appointment ~ 4 weeks
   - Specialist Musculoskeletal Assessment
   - Investigations ordered on same day
   - Consultant opinion on the same day
   - Listed for procedure/intervention on same day
   - Injection Therapy performed on same day
   - Refer for other specialist
   - Refer for other rehabilitation if appropriate
   - Correspondence to GP and Physio

4. **Refer to Secondary Care** (as per current protocol)

5. **Patient discharged with self-management plan**

6. **Refer to ED/ Ortho/ Rheum** (as per current protocol)

**Objectives/Aims:**

The objective was to establish a care pathway for patients with non-traumatic hip and knee conditions between primary and secondary care. This pathway aims to:

1. Provide timely access to physiotherapy for patients
2. Improve access for patients who require further investigations/specialist opinion
3. Improve communication and streamline care between services

**Method:**

In November 2015 a care pathway for patients presenting to GPs with non-traumatic hip or knee pain was established between the MSK Triage Service in Tallaght Hospital, GPs and Dublin South West PCCC. The number of Hip and Knee referrals received to the MSK Triage service were compared between January-June 2015 and January-June 2016.

**Results:**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knee</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>244</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hip</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>106</td>
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<tr>
<td>42%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<td>46%</td>
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**Conclusion**

This initial data does not show changes in numbers referred to MSK Triage clinics with Hip and Knee pathology. This highlights the need for further promotion and dissemination of the pathway with GPs in Dublin South West.

**References**