

## THE JOURNAL OF THE IRISH HEAD AND NECK SOCIETY

**Title:** The 'Neck Lump Clinic' - A novel approach to efficiently improve patient care

**Body:** Background

Early detection of head and neck malignancy significantly reduces morbidity and mortality. With new-patient referrals reaching unprecedented levels, delayed diagnoses are compromising patient outcomes. A number of national measures have been implemented in an effort to tackle this. However, with over 40,000 patients currently awaiting ENT appointments in Ireland, alternative pathways are continually sought. The aim of this study was to evaluate the efficacy of a novel one-stop clinic for neck lumps in another health service.

Method

Following referral to a UK tertiary hospital in 2023 with a neck lump, patients were randomly allocated to either the 'one-stop' clinic, which offered same day ultrasound, or standard clinic. A retrospective study was conducted comparing the first 50 patients seen in each.

Results

The study found a statistically significant delay in diagnosis for patients seen in the normal ENT clinic, with a time to diagnosis of 28 days compared to 22.7 days for patients seen in the one-stop clinic ( $p=0.031$ ). Additionally, overall hospital visits were reduced.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the one-stop clinic model, with immediate access to ultrasound and head and neck expertise, significantly reduces diagnostic delays, improves compliance with national standards and reduces number of hospital visits. National implementation should be considered.

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