

I'm leaking again: Evaluation of Unplanned Attendances to an SLT-Led Outpatient Laryngectomy Clinic

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Introduction:

People who undergo laryngectomy surgery and tracheoesophageal puncture (TEP) formation frequently require life-long management within a specialist speech and language therapy (SLT) clinic. The SLT team at St. James'™ Hospital, Dublin (SJH) manages a growing outpatient caseload of over 150 laryngectomees, 57% of whom require TEP and voice prosthesis management. Unscheduled care is a frequent characteristic of this service. Patients can contact the service via text, email or phone and often require urgent management in order to avoid adverse health consequences and promote safety and well-being at home.

Methods:

A retrospective chart review was conducted of all unscheduled attendances to the SLT-led outpatient laryngectomy clinic at SJH during the year of 2022.

Results:

There were a total of 85 unscheduled appointments in 2022. Reasons for attendance included early voice prosthesis failure, dislodged voice prostheses and deterioration in swallow function and/or tracheoesophageal voice. A number of patients required multiple unscheduled appointments and further analysis and description of these is provided.

Conclusion:

Implications and benefits of the SLT-led clinic include cost-savings, avoidance of adverse health consequences, and avoidance of admission. Findings will inform future service development in the context of a growing caseload and increasingly complex laryngectomy cohort.