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Laparoscopic surgery rates for major colorectal cancer surgery in NI in 2018

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Background

United Kingdom National Institute for Health Care Excellence guidance currently favours using laparoscopic access in major colorectal cancer (CRC) surgery, due to decreased post-operative inpatient stays and a faster patient recovery. Laparoscopic access rates in CRC surgery are routinely produced for England and Wales, we report the first data for Northern Ireland (NI).

Materials and Methods

Clinical data on 1 097 patients with unique primary CRC diagnosed in 2018 in NI were evaluated by the N. Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR). Details on surgery were completed by clinicians in each Health and Social Care Trust and forwarded to the NICR for analysis. Data were compared with that published for England/Wales in the National Bowel Cancer Audit for patients diagnosed in 2018/2019.

Results

Of the 1 097 CRC patients in NI in 2018, 727 (66.3%) underwent major CRC surgeries. Of these, 317 (43.6%) were attempted laparoscopically and 280 (38.5%) were completed laparoscopically with 37 patients converted to open surgery. The proportion of laparoscopic completed surgeries ranged from 18.8-53.0% across the 5 NI Trusts, compared to ranges of 45-80% in England/Wales. Four out of five NI Trusts had the lowest laparoscopic access rates when compared with all Cancer Alliances/Trust areas of England/Wales. Based on these results NI would be considered an outlier for this type of access for CRC surgery.

Conclusions

NI laparoscopic access rates for major CRC surgeries are amongst the lowest in the UK (excluding comparisons with Scotland), These data provide value for population based audits in highlighting areas for improvement in care and will be used to drive change according to standard practice.

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