

Project Number: CC015

Title: Exploring current trends in cleft surgery across the UK

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Scientific Outline:

Cleft lip and palate is a common congenital abnormality and is a complex reconstructive surgical challenge. A myriad of surgical options are commonly used around the world with wide variations in management regimes both in terms of types and timings of operations. The Clinical Standards Advisory Group (CSAG) report in 1998 described a great deal of variation in practice around centres in Europe with UK centres producing poor maxillary growth outcomes when compared to outcomes from Oslo. Following the CSAG report, a centralisation of UK cleft services in the UK over 10 years has demonstrated an improvement in growth and speech outcomes (as shown in the Cleft Care UK report 2015). Some aspects of cleft care, such as speech outcome, are very carefully monitored and data captured at specific audit points on the CRANE database. The James Lind Alliance prioritised research to investigate the best protocol for primary repair of both eth lip and palate including technique, timing and sequence. There is a need to capture surgical data so that the effectiveness of techniques and regimes can be analysed in terms of complication profiles and outcomes achieved.

The Cleft Collective collects surgical data through surgical questionnaires completed by surgeons. There are currently four surgical questionnaires in circulation, three long questionnaires which are repair specific and a shorter surgical questionnaire which can be used for any cleft related surgery. Although the three longer questionnaires are in circulation they are not routinely completed by each site. The short surgical questionnaire has the highest return rate and this project will solely focus on the data from this form, describing surgical trends across the UK.

The specific questions that this project will investigate are:

1. Can the short surgical questionnaire provide quality data that can be understood and analysed?
2. What operations are being performed for primary lip and palate repair and at what time points?
3. What are the national trends in use of perioperative medication adjuncts including tranexamic acid, steroids and antibiotics?

Method

This project will use existing questionnaire data from the Cleft Collective short surgical questionnaire. Specifically it will examine primary operations at this initial investigation. Secondary operations may be considered in future projects when more data is available. Descriptive statistics will be used to describe the data. The data will be examined as a whole and then by cleft type.