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Title

An Innovation to a Multidisciplinary Follow up Clinic for Esophageal Atresia Patients

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Objective : In order to improve the long term care of patients with operated esophageal atresia (EA) a multidisciplinary clinic was created. This was done to provide a favourable environment where parents could learn about the disease of their child and where the child can be assessed by multiple specialists on the same visit. Subsequent evaluation of the clinic was performed by the parents.

Methods : An outpatient clinic was established, taking place every two weeks, where the child is assessed by a gastroenterologist, pulmonologist, surgeon, and nurse specialized in the treatment of EA. Following each clinic a multidisciplinary meeting is held where individual cases are discussed and a treatment plan is formulated. A follow up phone call is made to the parents by the nurse to convey the treatment plan. Patients are followed up until the age of 18yrs, when a transition to adult care is done in collaboration with adult gastroenterologists. A survey was mailed to families in order to evaluate their satisfaction with regards to the structure and functioning of the clinic.

Results : The survey was distributed to 60 families, with a 75% response rate. The response was of an overwhelming success with 91% rating their care with the clinic as very good or excellent. 84% felt the environment was excellent, 87% consider the participation of the team was outstanding and 94% thought the attitude of the team was tremendous. Only 67% felt that they had received sufficient information at the clinic and most would have requested more information. The major complaint was suboptimal access to the clinic, parking and administration.

Conclusion : A collaborative approach is an excellent way to follow patients with complex medical conditions. The multidisciplinary clinic runs efficiently and the results of the survey demonstrate a very high level of satisfaction of parents with children with EA. A nutritionist was added to the team after receiving feedback from the parents from the survey, which was widely appreciated. We are currently developing an information brochure for parents to optimize distribution of information.