

A NOVEL VIRTUAL ADVICE MEETING IMPROVES ACCESS TO TIMELY GENETICS ADVICE FOR PAEDIATRICIANS AND NEONATOLOGISTS



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1. INTRODUCTION

UK government policy has led to increased availability of genetic testing, with an emphasis on Paediatricians and Neonatologists requesting a broad range of genetic tests (1). This has increased access to genetic diagnosis in children, however there is a need for **support and guidance for clinicians** to navigate new and complex pathways. Additionally, there are currently **long waiting lists** for outpatient genetics clinics and genetic test results in many regions. Such delays can negatively impact patients and their families.

2. AIM & METHODS

A **novel weekly virtual Genetics Advice Meeting** for Paediatricians and Neonatologists was designed and piloted as a service improvement project. The meeting created a forum for clinicians to discuss cases with consultant geneticists and was piloted for 6 months.

The meeting aimed to:

- Provide **helpful advice** in a timely manner.
- Generate a **collaborative approach** to patient care.
- **Share knowledge**.
- **Alter management** in the patients discussed.

The meeting addressed:

- 1) whether referral was indicated
- 2) urgency
- 3) genetic testing to initiate at the point of referral
- 4) any non-genetic tests to initiate
- 5) key information to provide with the referral.

The meeting was evaluated using **anonymous surveys** of attendees who were asked to rate the effectiveness of the meeting using Likert rating scales. Data was gathered about the advice given and the aspects of management altered.

“Being able to discuss a case with a geneticist and get useful advice early on, rather than submitting a referral and waiting, is just gold dust!”

“A fantastic service, very accessible and relaxed - will save a lot of time with regards to referrals and cut out delays in management”

3. FINDINGS: DATA

- 24 Paediatric cases, 14 Neonatal cases and 6 Community Paediatric cases were discussed (**n=44**), from 10 different hospitals.
- 11 cases were urgent, 24 routine and in 6 cases genetics referral was not indicated.
- **The meeting discussion altered management in all cases.**
- In 59% (n=26) the genetic testing planned was altered by the meeting.
- Non-genetic tests were advised in 8 cases and non-genetic referral in 7 cases.
- Key additional information was attained in 24 cases.

4. FINDINGS: CLINICIAN VIEWS



Figure 1. Word cloud of free text comments

Paediatricians + neonatologists:

- 77% strongly agreed the meeting discussion was **helpful**
- 88% strongly agreed they **would attend again**
- 73% strongly agreed they **felt more confident in the management plan** after the meeting

Genetics consultants:

- Found the meeting helpful for **networking** with referrers
- Found it helpful to **educate** around clinical cases

Would you like to attend?
Email rachel.coles3@nhs.net

(Clinicians in North East London only)