

3.2 We now highlight aspects of care in which "less than adequate" care was graded; we have drawn on the comments of the review teams in order to summarise the trends, bearing in mind that 100 procedures were assessed in all.

PRE-OPERATIVE CARE (Para A-F)

3.3 The review teams were asked to consider six elements of pre-operative care: timing and appropriateness of initial referral/condition on arrival; clinical assessment and management; accuracy and completeness of diagnosis; appropriateness of initial treatment strategy; timing of planned treatment; and immediate pre-operative management, including nursing. Note the comments below apply to procedures – total number 100, as opposed to the total number of children, which is 80.

A. Timing and appropriateness of initial referral/condition on arrival

In only six procedures was this aspect graded less than 4 and in only two was it considered to have affected the outcome.

B. Clinical assessment and management

In ten procedures there was some concern about adequacy of care, but in only five instances was it considered to be of sufficient importance to have made a difference to outcome.

C. Accuracy and completeness of diagnosis

In twelve instances, concerns were raised about diagnosis, but in only seven was a wrong or incomplete diagnosis thought to have made a difference to outcome.

D. Appropriateness of initial treatment strategy

Grades of less than adequate were given for fourteen procedures; in nine the inappropriateness of initial treatment strategy was thought to have affected outcome. It appears that team decisions were made about surgical strategy which were considered by the case reviewers to be inappropriate.

E. Timing of planned treatment

Delays in the timing of planned treatment were mentioned in relation to twenty-one procedures, but in only six cases were delays considered to have contributed adversely to outcome. There were delays both in the initial investigation (eg cardiac catheter), and between catheter and the actual time of surgery. In most cases the reviewers were unable to ascertain from the medical notes the precise reasons for delay, but issues of resources and of co-ordination are recorded in some instances.

F. Immediate pre-operative management, including nursing

Only three instances of "less than adequate" care were cited and in none was it considered likely to have made any difference to outcome.