

# How are we doing? A child centred assessment of satisfaction with a Paediatric Pre-Assessment Clinic (PPAC) at a tertiary referral centre

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## Introduction

This audit was a survey-based evaluation of the impact of a paediatric pre-assessment clinic (PPAC) – uniquely, from the viewpoint of the children attending - on improved patient experience and preparedness for surgery.

Guidelines for the Provision of Anaesthetic Services advise children should attend an anaesthetic pre-assessment service and that these should be audited for effectiveness (1, 2). Suggested standards are: i) >90% of patients should be satisfied with the verbal information they receive, and (ii) average feedback scores for communication quality should exceed 50% on a visual analogue scale (3).

## Aims

- To evaluate PPAC, from the perspective of the children attending, against two RCOA audit standards.
- Assess whether there is any evidence that PPAC reduces patient anxiety and/or improves preparedness for surgery.

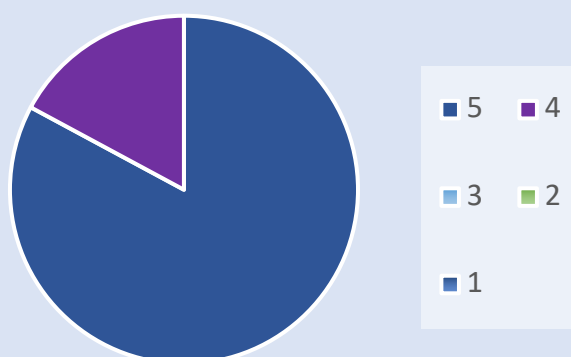
## Methods

A paper survey, comprising a mixture of question types, was created by the PPAC team (below). The survey was evaluated by the region's Young Peoples' Advisory Group who approved its use for children aged ≥ 10 years. The survey was given to all cognitively able children aged 10-16 years old attending PPAC at the Great North Children's Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne. Surveys were submitted anonymously, and the data was analysed using Excel.

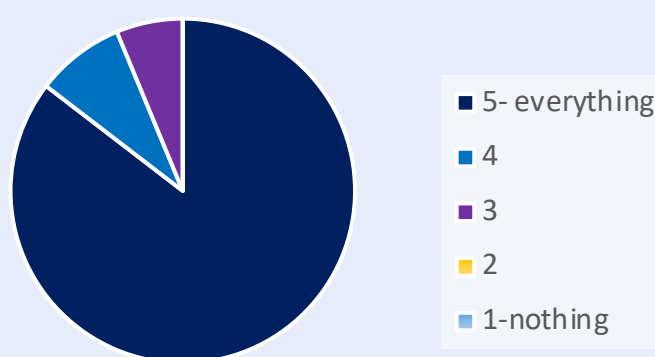
The survey questionnaire consists of 16 questions. Questions 1-5 are Likert scales (1-5) asking about patient age, first operation, operation explanation, involvement, and listening. Questions 6-11 are multiple choice or Likert scales asking about staff seen, operation explanation, involvement, listening, and operation satisfaction. Questions 12-16 are open-ended questions asking for feedback on better services, leaflets, operation feelings, usefulness, and other comments.

## Results

On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how well do you feel your anaesthetic, operation and hospital stay were explained to you?



On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being everything and 1 being nothing, did you get what you wanted out of the clinic?



In total, 48 responses were collected. 100% rated the quality of the explanations received positively; achieving the first audit standard concerned with patient satisfaction. Regarding respondents' feelings of involvement, being listened to and getting what they wanted from the clinic; 100% of respondents gave a score of ≥3 on these Likert scales, meeting the second audit standard for communication quality.

## Before Pre-assessment Clinic

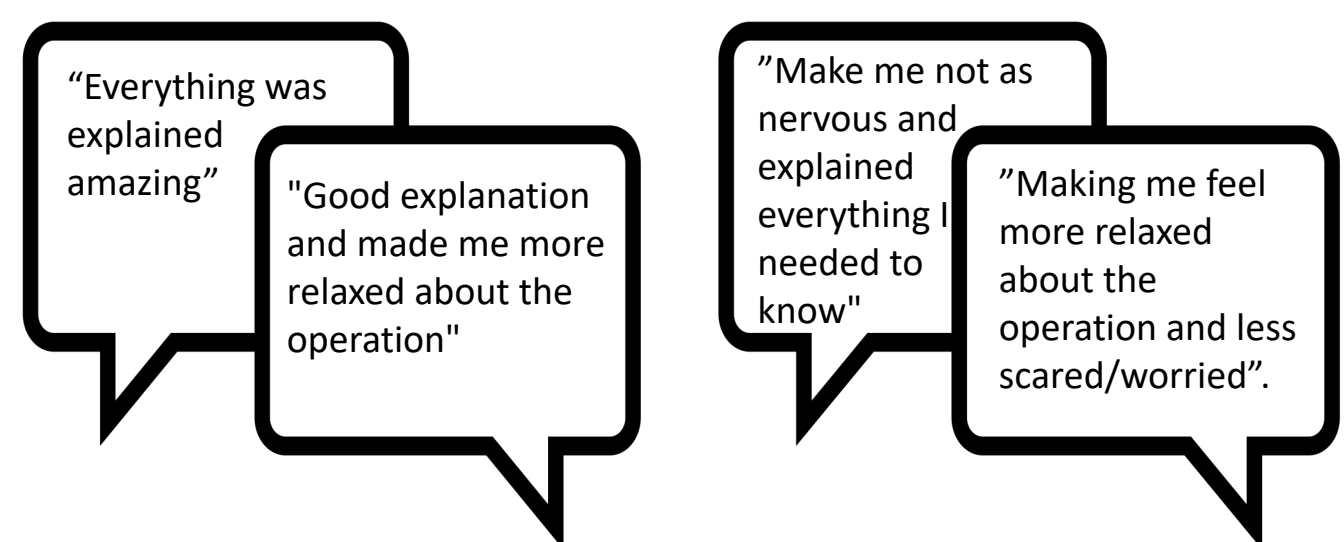
Shy, nervous, worried, unsure, sad, fearful, surprised, scared  
Nervous, relaxed, relieved Nervous, relieved, excited, happy  
Unsure, prepared Relaxed Shy, nervous, worried, unsure, relaxed,  
scared Nervous, relaxed Shy, nervous, worried, unsure, fearful,  
scared Nervous, relieved, worried, prepared Nervous, worried  
Excited Unsure, scared Unsure Nervous, worried, unsure, scared  
Nervous, excited, relaxed Relieved Nervous, relieved, worried,  
angry Relaxed Nervous, worried Nervous, relieved, excited, happy  
Nervous, worried, scared Relaxed, prepared, in control, happy  
Relieved, confident, excited, relaxed, prepared, in control, bored,  
happy Shy, nervous, relieved, worried, unsure, prepared, in control  
Shy, nervous, unsure, sad, fearful, bored, scared, important Relieved,  
confident, relaxed, prepared, bored, happy Nervous, worried, scared  
Nervous, relieved, excited, happy, scared, important Nervous,  
relieved, worried, confident, excited Nervous, relieved, worried,  
excited, prepared Excited, unsure Nervous, relieved, worried,  
confident, excited Relieved, excited, unsure, knowledgeable Shy,  
nervous, worried, unsure, sad, angry, fearful, bored, surprised, scared  
Nervous, relaxed Shy, nervous, worried, unsure, sad,  
knowledgeable, scared

## After Pre-assessment Clinic

Confident, excited, relaxed, prepared, in control, knowledgeable,  
happy, important, comforted Relieved, knowledgeable Excited,  
relaxed, prepared, knowledgeable, happy Relaxed, prepared  
Confident, excited, knowledgeable, happy, comforted Confident,  
excited, prepared, happy Relieved, confident, relaxed, prepared,  
knowledgeable, comforted Prepared, knowledgeable, happy  
Worried, excited, happy Nervous, relaxed, prepared, comforted  
Worried, knowledgeable Nervous, excited, relaxed, knowledgeable,  
happy, comforted Confident, prepared, comforted Prepared,  
knowledgeable, comforted Relaxed, prepared Relieved, prepared  
Relieved, important Relieved, confident, prepared, knowledgeable  
Confident, knowledgeable, happy Confident, in control, important  
Worried, confident, in control, knowledgeable, surprised, happy,  
scared, comforted Nervous, unsure, prepared, bored Confident,  
relaxed, happy Relieved, prepared, in control Nervous, worried,  
excited, prepared, knowledgeable, happy, comforted Confident,  
relaxed, prepared Excited, in control, important Nervous, confident,  
excited, relaxed, prepared, happy Relieved, confident, excited,  
relaxed, prepared, in control, knowledgeable, comforted Nervous,  
relaxed, prepared, bored, knowledgeable Confident, relaxed,  
prepared, knowledgeable, comforted.

The psychological impact of PPAC was assessed from questions asking respondents to circle words that represented how they were feeling before and after their consultation. The words circled before and after are listed above; colour coded red (negative emotions), amber (neutral emotions) and green (positive emotions). Pre-consultation, 'nervous', 'worried' and 'unsure' were most frequently circled; compared to 'prepared', 'knowledgeable' and 'relaxed', post-consultation. This suggests a positive psychological effect.

The positive responses on the Likert scales and positive psychological impact of PPAC was further supported by free text comments:



## Conclusions

This audit demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with PPAC, in particular the quality of explanations and communication children experience, allowing us to conclude that we are meeting the RCOA audit standards.

Our results suggest PPAC is having a positive impact on psychological preparedness for surgery. Formal pre-operative preparation programmes have been shown to have a positive impact on children (4) but evidence on PPACs specifically is lacking. In future work, to better evaluate psychological impact, we propose using an anxiety Visual Analogue Scale plus emotive descriptors to define a new quantitative score of 'anxiety plus theatre-readiness', which could reduce cancellations due to patient refusal.

## References

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