

NORTHERN IRELAND REGIONAL ORTHOPAEDIC TRAUMA COMMITTEE MINUTES
on THURSDAY 13th JANUARY 2022 @ 2PM
ZOOM MEETING ONLINE

Present:

Phil Charlwood (Chair)
David Warnock (Vice Chair)
Catherine Duffy (Past Chair)
Andrew Foster (Treasurer)
Andrew James (UHD Rep)
Andrew Johnston (RVH Rep)

Martyn Neil
David Spence
David Beverland
Brian Mockford
Simon Hendeson
David Kealey
Chris O'Neill
Ravi Pagoti
Sean McKenna

Fayaz Callachand
Rob Bruce-Brand
Danny Acton
Danny McCaffrey
Kieran Lappin
Angel Ruiz
Brian Hanratty

Gavan McAlinden
Jim McConway
Niall Breen
Luke Ogonda

Mark Murnaghan
Veronica Roberts
David McMurray

Apologies:

Jim Ballard
Tim Doyle
Paul Maginn
John Barr
David Swain
Carolyn Geddis
Elaine Robinson
Neville Thompson

Seamus O'Hagan
Andrew Adair
Gary Colleary
Maurice O'Flaherty
Denise Shirley
Michael Eames
Graham Bailie

Previous Minutes

Minutes from the NIROTC Zoom Meeting on 13.01.2022 were presented and passed with no amendments.

Treasurer's Report:

Andrew Foster gave an update on NIROTC's application for Charitable Status. The application was called forward in Nov 2021 and formally submitted to the Charities Commission to await a final decision.

Income:

AF explained that each member of NIROTC is expected to contribute £100 annually. Currently there are approximately 80 NHS Consultant T&O Surgeons in NI. In 2020, contributions were received from 48 members, however this number fell to just 39 in 2021 and to date in 2022, just 19 subscriptions have been paid. He reminded members that such payments are tax deductible and will be eligible for Gift Aid if charitable status is achieved.

The NIROTC Back Account details to set up a regular payment are:

Danske Bank Sort Code 950679 Account no. 20183261 (Please provide name as reference).

Expenditure:

In 2021 this included:

Trainee Fellowship Funding (£750 x5)	£3750
Martin Medal	£100
Martin Medal Room Hire	£800
Martin Medal Prizes	£750
Accountant Fee	£500
Zoom Platform	£240
TOTAL	£6140

TPD Report:

This was presented by Phil Charlwood on behalf of Jim Ballard who sent his apologies.

Currently there are 29 trainees with National Training Numbers.

3 are due to finish training in Aug 2022 with a further 3 finishing in Feb 2023.

SPR recruitment interviews are planned for the end of March 2022.

Mr Ballard is planning to meet with the PHA to discuss future NI T&O trainee and consultant numbers.

Arthroplasty WLI lists are ongoing in the SWAH. These are funded from the DoH through the Western Trust and currently are not contracted to provide direct training for our registrars.

JB is to explore the possibility of trainees attending and operating on these lists with Geraldine McKay, Director of Acute Services, WT.

Chairman's Report:

Phil Charlwood confirmed that to date, no acknowledgement or response to his letter to Health Minister, Robin Swann, had been received and this was very disappointing. Given the recent suspension of the NI Assembly it is unlikely to progress until after the assembly elections in May 2022.

A brief summary of the current low level of clinical elective operating across the region was given with more detailed information to follow in the Unit Reports.

Unit Reports:

UHD (Andrew James)

Fracture theatre activity is planned to return to 100% of pre-Covid levels by 04.04.22. Interviews for an Upper Limb Consultant post are scheduled for the end of March 2022.

RVH (Andrew Johnston)

Lynn Murphy has been appointed to a Locum Consultant post in Feb 2022. A further Locum Consultant has also been appointed in the last month.

MPH (David Warnock)

Elective theatre capacity has increased from 3 to 5 all-day theatres (4 elective / 1 fracture) thanks to the return of re-deployed nursing staff and some additional recruitment. This has also allowed the resumption of out-of-hours emergency theatre access in MPH. Out-patient clinics in MPH and regional MPROS clinics have now been re-established with some reduction in numbers being seen. Following the retirement of Mr Andrews in November 2021, patients on his waiting list have now been re-allocated to other consultant colleagues.

RBHSC (Catherine Duffy)

Consultant On-Call rota in RBHSC remains problematic. Miss Duffy & Mr Cosgrove are no longer involved in the rota and finding locum cover for these sessions is often difficult. The upper age limit for fracture patients treated in RBHSC has risen to 16 yo putting increased pressure on already stretched resources with great difficulty gaining theatre access. In-patient paediatric lists in MPH are now restricted to daycase morning only sessions and cases involving 2-5 yo patients all require 2 paediatric anaesthetists to be present. Currently there is no capacity in RBHSC theatres to accommodate this elective workload.

Altnagelvin (Phil Charlwood)

Trauma caseload remains busy. Mr John Wong is due to retire in April 2022. It is likely that 2 further colleagues will retire before the end of 2022. The 2022 Martin Medal Ceremony is planned for the Millennium Forum on 20.05.22 – please confirm attendance at the ceremony / dinner and any accommodation required to allow final numbers to be booked.

Craigavon (David McMurray).

Trauma remains busy - currently running 14 Trauma Lists/week – some cases are also being done on MPH lists

Elective lists are running at 20% of pre-Covid levels with 1 all-day elective and 1 all-day daycase list per week. Some new nurses have been recruited and hopefully elective activity will improve.

An Upper Limb Consultant interview has taken place. Lynsey Henderson has been appointed and will take up post in 2023 on completion of fellowship.

Discussion around reports:

Prof Beverland reported that primary joints activity in MPH in 2021 was 19% and to date in 2022 was 24% compared to pre-Covid activity. More alarming was the marked reduction in primary TKR activity which was 321 cases in 2019 compared to 25 cases in 2021.

Gavan McAlinden confirmed that 25 primary joints and 4 revision cases had been done in MPH that week with a total of 44 lists utilised for elective & fracture cases.

RVH theatre activity had also increased from 33 to 35 lists per week.

He also confirmed that the DoH had commissioned Prof Tim Briggs and his GIRFT team to undertake a review of Elective Orthopaedic Recovery across the NI region. This review is to commence in April 2022 with a completion date set for 2 months.

Simon Henderson reported that a Surgical Podiatry Pilot Scheme backed by the DoH is about to commence. A T&O Foot & Ankle Transformation Team led by Andrew Adair and including Simon Henderson, Veronica Roberts and Dessie Gibson is to meet with the College of Podiatry next week and Mr Adair will feed back to ROTC regarding the outcome of this.

Workstream Reports

David Warnock reported back on the initial contacts made with Geoff Cinnamon of 1-Logic re setting up a NIROTC website.

Setup costs are approximately £2000 with an annual running cost of £200-£300.

Discussion was had regarding the existing NI Fracture and TORC websites and the patient information already provided.

It was felt that the NIROTC site should initially be used to register and disseminate information to the membership with a payment facility to enable subscriptions to be paid and recorded. The website should also be set up to enable further expansion and perhaps public / patient information to be added at a later date.

DW to continue to liaise with 1-Logic to develop the concept.

Prof Beverland informed the meeting that the Patient Portal on ECR was now live. He suggested that Anne Mulgrew be invited to give a short presentation on the Patient Portal to consultants and registrars at the start of the next ROTC meeting in June 2022. This was agreed and Phil Charlwood will arrange this with Anne Mulgrew.

Poly-Trauma

Phil Charlwood reported that a meeting with David Kealey, Andrew Johnston and himself was yet to take place regarding progressing this matter further.

Ortho-Plastics

Niall Breen gave a comprehensive presentation on the current state of the NI Ortho-Plastic Service and the problems faced.

An Ortho-Plastic service is defined as a combined orthopaedic and plastic surgical team providing theatre, OPD, specialist nursing support, research & audit for its patients.

It is part of the NI Major Trauma Network and provides a Regional Pathway for open fracture treatment as well as on-going treatment for non-acute cases, the majority of which are trauma related and infections.

The main problem is a lack of infra-structure especially on the RVH site where the majority of open fractures present but there is inadequate plastic surgical manpower to deal with the cases in a timely manner and staff are striving to even provide a basic service. This may improve following the appointment of Mr Michael McBride to a new plastic surgery consultant post.

Measures required to help improve the service include provision of a regular scheduled combined out-patient clinic and theatre session in UHD, addition of a specialist nurse and 1 further limb reconstruction surgeon.

Discussion then followed regarding the referral of acute cases into the Ortho-Plastic service.

Luke Ogonda stated that initially cases should be referred to the Major Trauma Centre (RVH) for assessment. If a local flap is required, they stay in RVH. If a free flap is required, they are transferred to UHD.

Dave Kealey & Andrew Johnston expressed concern that this policy would swamp the RVH service.

Niall Breen then clarified that all new cases should first be referred to the Plastic Surgical registrar on-call in UHD along with photographs of the injury uploaded to NIPACS so that an informed opinion could be made before contacting either the receiving T&O team in RVH or UHD.

Andrew Johnston & Simon Henderson also raised the point that if NI was so poor at reaching TARN targets for treatment of these cases (NI 9%, UK overall 72%) – should we not consider sending a significant number out of the region for treatment.

Any Other Business

None

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 15th June at 10:30 am following Unit audit

Mrs Anne Mulgrew will be invited to give a presentation on the Patient Portal on ECR to the consultants and trainees at the start of the meeting.

Agenda / Previous Minutes / Zoom details will be circulated in advance.