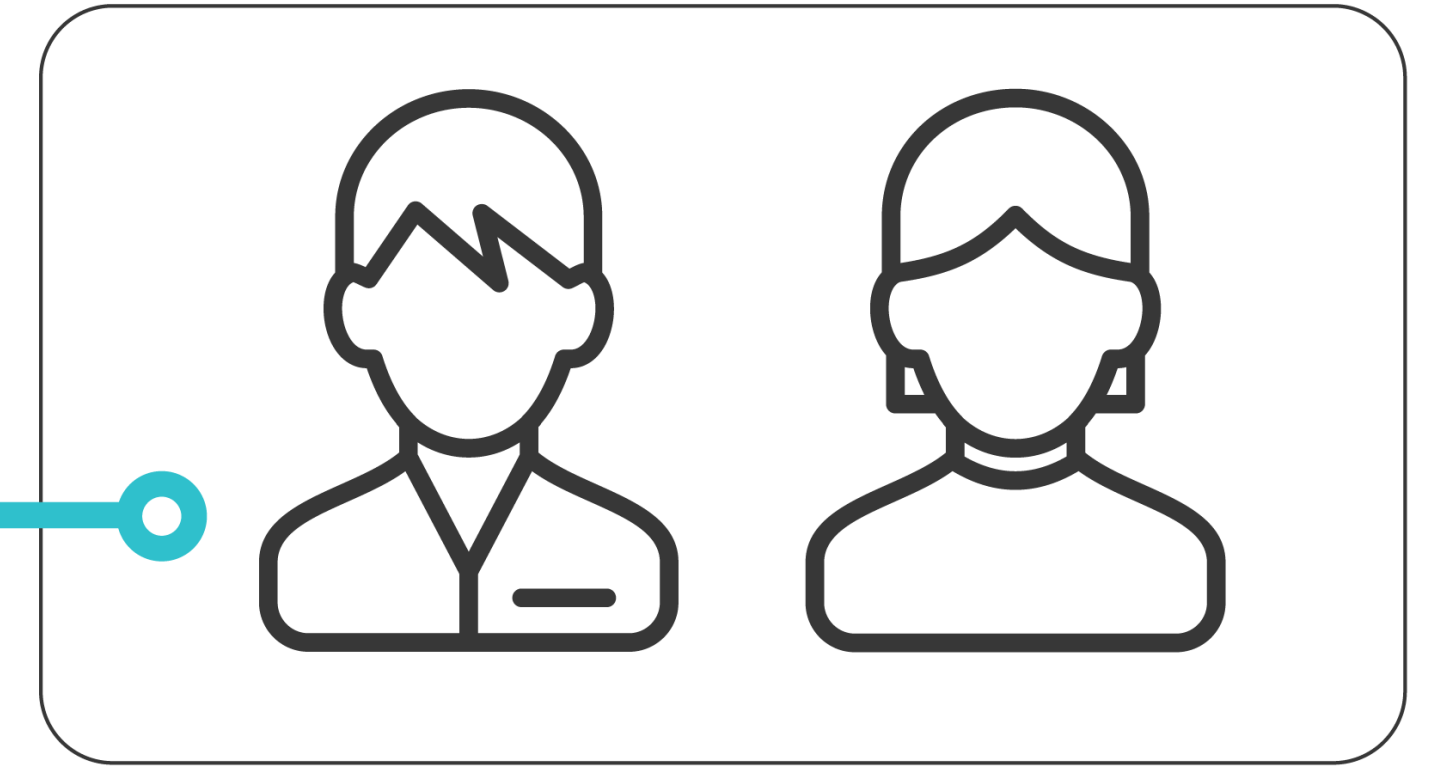
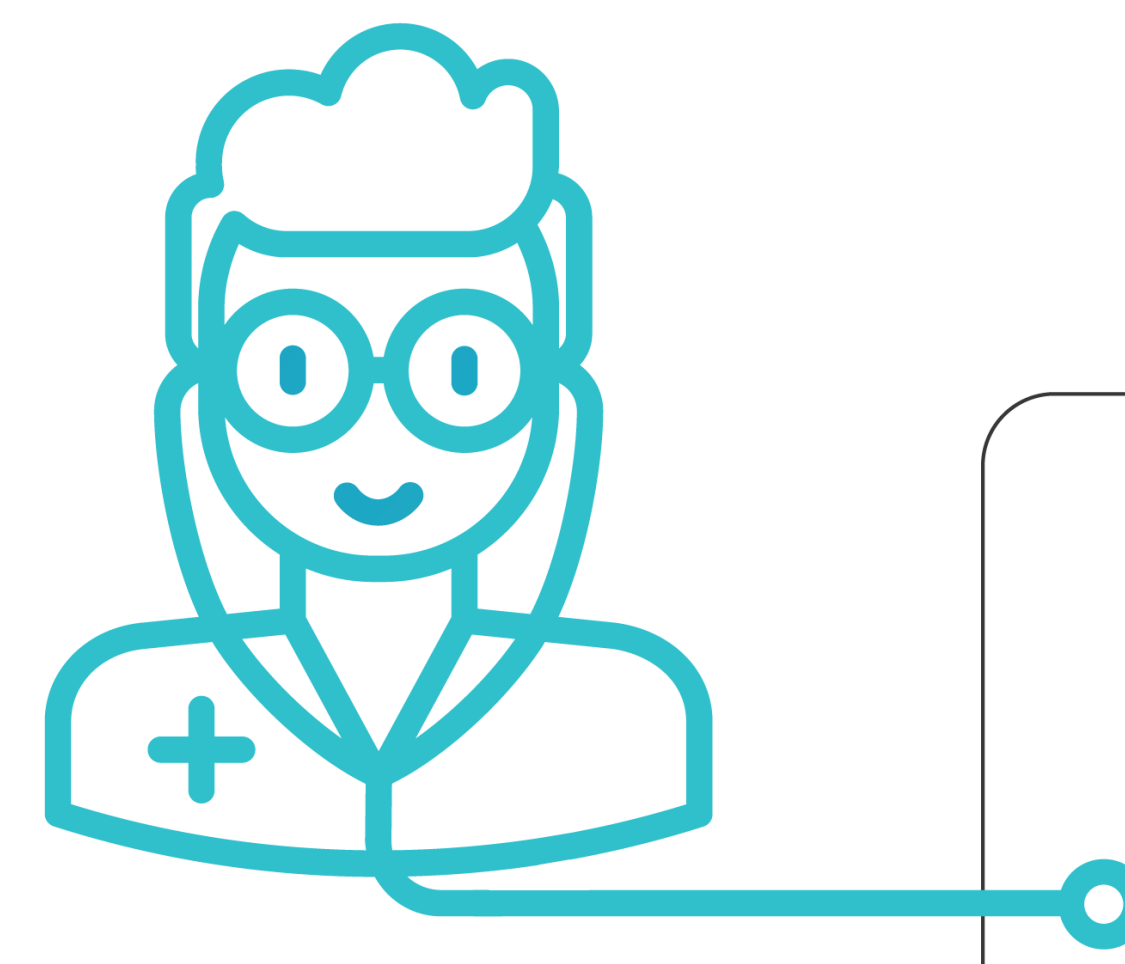


Respiratory Integrated Care; Evaluating the Patients Perspective

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BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

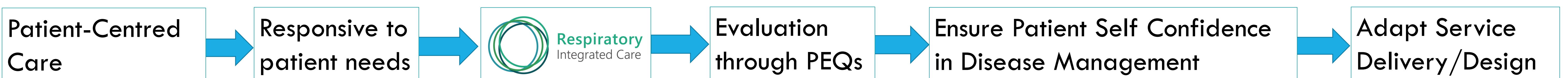
Both the WHO¹ and HSE² have identified patient centred care as a key priority in the design and delivery of healthcare. In order to provide high quality care to our patients, services need to be respectful and responsive to individual needs. Respiratory Integrated Care and the development of the Integrated Care Programme Chronic Disease puts these core principles at the forefront of their roll-out and delivery.

Respiratory Integrated Care (RIC) Nurse-led Clinics were established in County Galway in 2016. The service was last evaluated from a patient perspective in 2018 and is being re-evaluated to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the patient population.

In this study we sought to evaluate the patient's experience of attending a community based, Nurse-led Respiratory Clinic, ensuring that the care provided is of a high standard and is effective in meeting patient's needs. We also sought to assess whether patients confidence in disease self-management improved following intervention at the RIC Nurse-led Clinic, thus improving patient's own experience of living with a chronic respiratory disease.

METHODS

A patient experience questionnaire (PEQ) was posted to patients attending the RIC Nurse-led clinic between January 2021 & August 2022. The PEQ asked patients about their confidence in three aspects of their respiratory disease prior to, and following their attendance at the RIC Nurse-led clinic. Five questions were asked regarding the interaction with the Nurse; these related to being involved in decision-making, being able to understand the information provided and the opportunity to ask questions. Patients were asked if they were satisfied with the service and lastly a question regarding the location of the clinic was asked. A comment box was included to allow patients to provide feedback and/or suggestions of how to improve the service. The response rate of this PEQ was 61%.



RESULTS

The following charts and graphs represent the results of the RIC nurse-led clinic PEQ. Overall, there were high satisfaction levels with the clinics and interaction with the Clinical Nurse Specialist, with 95% (n=44) of patients been very satisfied or satisfied with their visit to the CNSp. 100% of patients attending the clinic stated that the visit was worthwhile.



Patient Comments

For the last number of years I have suffered with seasonal asthma. I didn't really understand this until I met with Niki in 2021. The summer of 2022 has been a joy, no issues with my hayfever or asthma.

Niki was very easy to talk to and understand. Appointment wasn't rushed and she explained everything clearly. I was confident leaving the appointment. She made a follow up call after my appointment to see how I was doing.

My appt was never rushed and I felt everything was explained very well.

...excellent service. It's a more relaxed environment than attending a large hospital.... huge advantage to have direct contact between the respiratory nurse and my GP.

Niki knew everything I wanted to know plus she was up to date with all the new medications

I found Nurse Niki very helpful and easy to talk to, communicate with and I learned a lot about my situation from her, and felt more at peace with my situation.

Thematic Analysis of Patient Comments

- Expressions of gratitude and satisfaction with the clinic
- Appreciation of being reviewed by an expert specialist nurse, with close links to their GP
- Evidence of a trusting therapeutic relationship- Excellent communication and explanation of complex information
- Patients given time/not rushed & had an opportunity to ask questions
- Improvements in symptoms following changes to treatment/ improved self-management
- Reduced travel- clinics were in local communities in venues closer to patients

DISCUSSION

The current RIC service is being absorbed into the Integrated Care Programme for Chronic Disease (ICPCD) Ambulatory Hub and Community Specialist Respiratory Team. This study looked at what aspects, from patient feedback of the existing RIC Nurse-led clinic, need to be incorporated when planning patient pathways for the new ICPCD service. According to Chambers et al⁴ Patient engagement can be supported by using an open honest approach, that is respectful of patient needs, compassionate and timely. Feedback gathered should be reviewed and incorporated into service design as it enhances service quality and delivery³.

While overall response rate was good, it could be improved. Observations of the authors found when the PEQ was sent soon after the patients' final review there were better PEQ return rates. This should be taken on board for further service evaluation PEQs in the ICPCD Ambulatory Hub.

On reviewing the results of patient confidence in disease management and understanding all 3 three areas examined showed high levels of confidence among patients attending the service. However, only 43% of patients showed increases in their understanding of their respiratory medications. This result highlights the need for further evaluation and review of patient medication education, both verbal and written to ensure a majority of patients show an improvement in medication understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to evaluate the existing RIC Nurse-Led Clinic in Galway, prior to the roll-out and delivery of the ICPCD Ambulatory Hub and Community Specialist Respiratory Team. Findings from this evaluation will be considered when developing patient pathways. This will ensure the new service is patient focused; leading to better outcomes through higher levels of patient engagement and patient satisfaction.

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