

Transforming the Hand Surgery Assessment Pathway in the Western Isles (With a little help from our friends at NHSGCC)



The project follows principles accepted and promoted by the **Scottish Access Collaborative** including **Active Clinical Referral Triage**, providing face to face appointments only if there is a **clinical value** and **avoiding unnecessary travelling**.

NHSWI Tec Team, Orthopaedic Team and NHSGCC Royal Infirmary based Orthopaedic Hand Surgeon Grzegorz Sianos worked together to transform the hand surgery pathway for the Western Isles. The development of this unique Hand Surgery Video Clinic based on the Attend Anywhere platform aimed for efficient use of the resources, patient centered service, and cost-effectiveness.

Innovations in Technology

The use of a hand-held high definition camera enables the local healthcare practitioner to conduct the examination with remote expert input from the surgeon. With patient clinical information available online via Electronic Patient Records including access to X-rays through PACS, a diagnosis and treatment plan can be quickly decided upon and instigated.



If the treatment plan is non-surgical, for example if a steroid injection is required, then this can be done during the video consultation. If surgery is necessary then consent is obtained from the patient during the same video clinic appointment.

When a patient is scheduled for surgery, the pre-op procedures are all completed in the Western Isles, meaning that the patient has to make just one trip to the mainland for the actual surgery.



Putting Patients First

The video consultation service makes expert healthcare accessible to a much larger group of people, and is already changing lives for the better.

Video clinics have long been utilized in other areas of medicine, and it is apparent that the potential to enhance orthopaedic treatment also exists!



Mr Sianos is working with Innes Morton, an extended scope practitioner physiotherapist at Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway, to offer online patient assessments through the real-time video clinics.

This allows patients in the Western Isles to receive an initial diagnosis at the local hospital with Innes, with Mr Sianos contributing his expertise via the video link. This eliminates the need for patients to travel to mainland Scotland for a face to face consultation.

Furthermore, the video clinics also serve to keep waiting list times down as patients can be more efficiently scheduled in and most of diagnostic as well as non-surgical treatment solutions are to hand.

Project Progress and Feedback

In December of 2017, the first test trial clinic for the project took place at the Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway with promising results. Since then, with implementation in real cases with patients, feedback has been excellent and the value of this technology is consistently evident.

The first clinic involving patients took place in April 2018, during which eleven patients participated. It was determined that seven of these patients would require surgery. This first clinic alone created a saving of over £3000 in travel expenses and 1.6 tonnes of carbon emissions. Since then the clinics are held quarterly allowing for the waiting time target to be met.

Recognition and Award

Our project to transform the hand surgery assessment pathway in the Western Isles is the perfect example of how **Realistic Medicine** strives to best support patients, and how we are at the forefront of revolutionizing healthcare in Scotland.

This initiative won the Innovative Remote and Rural Services category, at the Digital Health & Care Awards in February 2019.

