



ROYAL
COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS
OF IRELAND

National Histopathology Quality Improvement (NHQI) Programme

NHQI Key Quality Indicators Explained

National Specialty Quality Improvement Programmes

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Addendum Reporting

An addendum report is a term used to describe any further report issued by the histopathologist after the original report. The NHQI Programme reports on two types of addendum reports as they are considered to have the most possible impact on patients' care. These reports are called corrected and amended reports.

A corrected report is written by the histopathologist when they realise a minor error has occurred that has not resulted in any change to the diagnosis.

An amended report is written when the change required does impact the diagnosis. The Programme has set targets to ensure information on these reports is collected, analysed and used to make improvements in laboratories.

Autopsy

An autopsy is a post-mortem examination which takes place after a person is deceased. An autopsy is carried out by a pathologist when it is necessary to discover the reason why a person has died. A coroner will direct that an autopsy be performed if information is needed for legal reasons.

The NHQI Programme collects some information about autopsy procedures in Ireland at this time and intends to increase the information collected in the coming years in order to provide important findings that can assist those who provide this service.

Frozen Section

Frozen section is the analysis of a sample of tissue taken during surgery using a specialised technique. This allows the histopathologist to make a diagnosis in real-time which can help the surgeon to make vital decisions during a surgical procedure.

The NHQI Programme considers frozen section in terms of three key quality indicators.

1) Frozen section concordance rate, which is the frequency with which the diagnosis made during the surgical procedure agrees with the final diagnosis made after the surgery is complete when a more complex analysis of the tissue sample can take place.

2) Frozen section deferral rate is the number of cases where the histopathologist waited to provide a diagnosis until after the final more complex review of the tissue sample was made.

3) Frozen section turnaround time is the time from when the sample is taken to when the complete frozen section review is available to provide information to the surgical team.

Intradepartmental Consultation (IDC)

This is when a consultant histopathologist looks for a second opinion on a patient's case, from another consultant histopathologist within their department or within their regional hospital network. This is done before they approve the pathology report.

The NHQI Programme has set a number of targets for intradepartmental consultation for histology and cytology cases. These targets are not all the same.

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Review

A multidisciplinary team is made up of healthcare workers who participate and contribute to the care of a patient. They are from a range of different professions such as doctors, nurses and dietitians. The meetings they attend are called multidisciplinary team meetings. At these meetings all those involved in a patient's care have the opportunity to discuss the details of the patient's case and to make important decisions regarding the patient's treatment plan.

The NHQI Programme collects specific information on how many patients' cases are presented at MDT meetings and the level of agreement with the diagnosis made prior to the meeting.

Turnaround Time

Turnaround time (TAT) is the time measured from when the laboratory first receives a patient's case to the time the consultant histopathologist has approved the final report. It is calculated based on working days only and so does not include weekends or bank holidays. Once approved the report can be sent to the referring surgeon or physician and the results can be shared with the patient.

The NHQI programme has set targets for turnaround times within histology and cytology cases. These targets are not all the same.