

Letter to the Editor

Day-case tonsillectomy – a public demand?

Dear Sir,

I read with interest the review article 'Tonsillectomy, adenoidectomy and adenotonsillectomy: are they safe day case procedures?' by Yardley (1992) and look forward to the results of the feasibility study in the North Trent region. There are however several points which emerged from a recent survey undertaken at this hospital which are of interest and are closely related to the article.

In the study, parents of children undergoing the aforementioned operations were asked about the acceptability, feasibility and perceived risks of day-case surgery. Eighty per cent of parents would be unhappy or unable to take their children home on the day of surgery. The reasons cited were, risk of haemorrhage, problems recovering from the anaesthetic and a non-specific worry about the child after surgery. Twelve per cent of parents would have been unable to take their children home as they did not satisfy the guidelines laid down by the Royal College of Surgeons.

The group which expressed a preference for day-case surgery had a lower mean age (5.4 compared to 8.2 years) but no sex bias as compared to the overall cohort. Within this group several parents had medical or nursing knowl-

edge, but worryingly the majority did not know of any complications related to surgery.

This study not only raises the question regarding the public's knowledge of complications, but in the time of the Patient's Charter asks if the public actually want day-case tonsillectomy.

Yours faithfully,

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References

- Yardley, M. P. J. (1992) Tonsillectomy, adenoidectomy and adenotonsillectomy: are they safe day case procedures? *Journal of Laryngology and Otology* **106**: 299–300.
- Royal College of Surgeons of England Commission on the Provision of Surgical Services, 1985. *Guidelines for day-case surgery*.