

We Asked, You Answered

PHYSICIAN SURVEY ON CARDIAC WAIT TIMES»RESULTS

In June 2005, the Cardiac Care Network of Ontario asked for your opinions regarding referral patterns and wait times for catheterization, PCI and cardiac surgery. Over 400 cardiologists, cardiac surgeons, and internists (cardiology specialty) received the survey and the following is a summary of what they told us.

Cardiac Wait Times

- On average, 67% of physicians feel that wait times are ideal or almost ideal at the centre they send the greatest number of their patients for catheterization, PCI, or cardiac surgery.
- 34% of physicians say they do not usually source wait time data.

Referrals for Catheterization/PCI /Cardiac Surgery

- Physicians refer the greatest number of their cardiac patients to a specific centre because they are on staff at the centre or it is their usual referral centre.
- 4% or less of physicians take procedural wait time into consideration when referring to a specific centre.

Referring to Other Centres

- On average, physicians feel that about 22% of their non-urgent catheterizations, angioplasty or cardiac surgery patients would be willing and able to go to another centre for their procedure. Note: The cardiac patient survey reports that 21% of non-urgent cardiac patients say if they had been given the option to have their cardiac procedure done sooner at a hospital further from home, they would have considered it.
- Over half of physicians do not have an alternate centre for referrals – even if the wait list is too long at their usual referral centre. 7 out of 10 physicians in the past 12 months had not talked to any of their cardiac patients about having their procedure done sooner at a centre further from home.
- Physicians identified the distance a patient would have to travel and communication with personnel of other centre as the greatest barrier in referring patients to a centre that is not their usual one.
- About half of physicians feel that a centre's ability to schedule patients for same-sitting PCI procedures, and greater standardization of processes, would have an important influence on a physician's decision to refer to a cardiac centre they may not be as familiar with.

The summary information on all surveys is available at www.ccn.on.ca

You Answered, We Responded

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Patients deserve timely access to quality cardiac care and have options regarding where they receive treatment. Providing your patients with accurate and timely wait time information improves patient access and contributes to quality care.

In the physician survey, several barriers to referring patients to another centre were identified. Through CCN's 10 Point Plan for Action to improve access to cardiac care, many concerns have been and are being addressed.

Communication with Referring Physicians

CCN member hospitals send standardized timely reports of procedure results to referring physicians.

Scheduling Same-sitting PCI Procedures

CCN member hospitals schedule same-sitting or same-day PCI procedures, whenever clinically appropriate, for catheterization patients who have been referred from a more distant centre.

Greater Standardization of Practices

CCN is developing best practice guidelines in five key areas: repatriation, same-sitting PCI, triage referral process, standardized procedural reporting, and patient travel information.

Availability of Wait Times to Inform Decision Making

CCN has accelerated the availability of wait time information for the public and Regional Cardiac Care Coordinators through the CCN website and a virtual real-time system. Access to wait times has also been broadened through the Provincial Wait Time Strategy (www.health.gov.on.ca).

A copy of the 10 Point Plan for Action is available at www.ccn.on.ca.

For more information regarding the CCN Physician, Patient or Public Surveys, please contact us.