

# The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the UK National Hypothalamic-pituitary Axis Tumour (HPAT) multidisciplinary meeting

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## Background

- The monthly virtual HPAT multi-disciplinary meeting (MDT) was set up in 2010 to provide a national forum to discuss the management of children with rare and complex suprasellar brain tumours.
- Given the impact of Covid-19 on many clinical services, we wished to review its effect on the running of the national HPAT MDT as part of a service evaluation project.

## Objective

To evaluate the impact of the COVID19 pandemic by comparing the:

- Number of meetings
- Cases (news/ previously discussed)
- Diagnosis
- Attendees
- Specialties
- Centres
- Outcomes (review of diagnosis, investigation plan, management and follow-up)

## Methods

- Retrospective descriptive study conducted between January 2019 and April 2021.
- Data was collected from electronically recorded minutes generated after each patient discussion.
- In October 2019, the format of the meeting was also changed from organising cases by monthly “themes” to a more open access MDT approach.

## Results

	PRE COVID (January 2019-February 2020)	POST COVID (March 2020-April 2021)
<b>Number of meetings</b>	12	11 (March, April and May 2020 cancelled due to the pandemic)
<b>Cases discussed</b>	42 (median 3/meeting, range: 3-5)	50 (median 4/meeting, range: 3-6)
<b>Diagnosis</b>	8 craniopharyngiomas 6 prolactinomas 6 thickened pituitary stalks 5 Rathke's cysts 5 astrocytomas 2 teratomas 2 germinomas 3 non-functioning pituitary adenomas 1 optic pathway glioma 1 pars intermedia cyst 1 pineal papillary tumour 1 ectopic pituitary gland 1 Cushing disease	9 thickened pituitary stalks 8 craniopharyngiomas 8 prolactinomas 4 Rathke's cysts 3 pituitary adenomas 2 Cushing disease, 1 germinoma 1 astrocytoma
<b>New cases</b>	32 (76%)	43 (86%)
<b>Previously discussed cases</b>	10 (24%)	7 (14%)
<b>Attendees</b>	119 (median 9/meeting, range: 5-15)	227 (median 21/meeting, range: 17-26)
<b>Specialties</b>	5 different specialties: 92 endocrinologists (77.3%) 9 oncologists (7.5%) 8 neurosurgeons (6.7%) 8 radiologists (6.7%) 1 nephrologist (<1%)	4 different specialties: 169 endocrinologists (74.4%) 30 oncologists (13.2%) 16 neurosurgeons (7.04%) 12 radiologists (5.2%)
<b>Centres</b>	12 (all from the UK)	19 (including UK, Ireland and the Netherlands)
<b>Outcomes</b>	Diagnosis review: 18 (43%) Investigation plan: 19 (45%) Management: 19 (45%) Follow-up: 16 (38%)	Diagnosis review: 24 (48%) Investigation plan: 33 (66%) Management: 21 (42%) Follow-up: 24 (48%)

## Conclusions

- It is clear there is an increasing interest in participating in the HPAT MDT despite the current COVID pandemic.
- The number of cases presented, professionals engaged and centres involved has actually increased significantly during the COVID period, likely due to the change in working patterns to using increasingly virtual methods.
- Therefore, a national, regular, virtual HPAT MDT is feasible and welcomed, facilitating dialogue amongst a wider specialist professional group and benefitting the management of patients with rare hypothalamo-pituitary axis tumours

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