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Clinically Led Value Based Procurement Project Results in NICE Guidance for Clinicians

Entry details

Summary Overview

In 2021, Robert Wilcockson and Ian Dodd from NHS Supply Chain: Sterile Intervention and Associated Consumables category service, provided by Collaborative Procurement Partnership LLP, embarked on a value-based procurement project focusing on innovative technology which had the potential to improve patient experience following hernia operations, as well as providing NHS trusts with an opportunity to benefit financially from a change in surgical products used.

As a result, the National Institute for Care and Excellence (NICE) recommended clinicians consider the use of specialist cyanoacrylate glues instead of tacks to secure surgical mesh in hernia operations.

It is a significant advisory document because it makes clear the many benefits that patients will get from the improvements and Robert and Ian are leading the charge to get national adoption by working with societies, such as the British Hernia Society, and suppliers to transform patient pathways across the whole NHS network. Glues that meet the standards in the NICE MedTech Innovation Briefing are now available through NHS Supply Chain's Wound Closure Framework.

However, the publication of the guidance is just the first part of the story for this particular project as there are other financial, or efficiency benefits available to trusts by switching from tackers to glue.

Robert and Ian have subsequently developed a patient pathway document where directors of finance and procurement at NHS trusts can see at-a-glance the potential financial savings and long-term benefits of using glues as opposed to tackers.

A further development led by the team in the future will be to examine, outside of hernias, what other uses these glues can have and what other innovative products are out there in the medtech world that can offer similar benefits.

I wish to nominate the following person (or group/organisation) for award. I understand that by submitting this nomination I declare that the information I have provided is – to the best of my knowledge – accurate and complete.

Nominee Robert Wilcockson and Ian Dodd

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Nominees Region	International
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Supporting Info

Supporting Statement

A clinically led project by Robert Wilcockson and Ian Dodd has resulted in new advice being issued from the National Institute for Care and Excellence (NICE) on using specialist glues in hernia operations.

Robert, a Senior Category Manager and Ian, a Clinical Engagement, and Implementation Manager, are responsible for the Wound Closure framework for NHS Supply Chain: Sterile Intervention and Associated Consumables category service, provided by Collaborative Procurement Partnership LLP.

In 2021, Robert and Ian embarked on a value-based procurement project focusing on innovative technology which had the potential to improve patient experience following hernia operations, as well as providing NHS trusts with an opportunity to benefit financially from a change in surgical products used.

As a result of that project, the National Institute for Care and Excellence (NICE) is recommending clinicians consider the use of specialist cyanoacrylate glues instead of tacks to secure surgical mesh in hernia operations.

Each year 70,000 hernia operations are carried out in the UK but currently only 10 per cent use glues to secure surgical mesh. The majority use either metal or plastic tackers instead. Whereas cyanoacrylate glue eventually disappears within the body, tackers remain and have the potential to cause pain at a later point.

Robert and Ian work with a range of medical suppliers to evaluate new products to the market and their potential benefit for NHS patients and the trusts which purchase them. After reviewing a considerable amount of worldwide clinical data and working with suppliers to bring cyanoacrylate glues to the forefront of the market, it became evident to Robert and Ian that this technology presented more than just a cost saving but a benefit to the patients.

They believed this was the perfect opportunity to carry out a value-based procurement project – one of many that NHS Supply Chain has commenced in recent months.

Robert and Ian embarked on finding clinicians who were willing to review the products and document the benefit to the patients. After positive responses from several leading clinicians in this field (and even Ian having his own hernia fixed with this product), the project started to gain momentum.

The project examined a holistic view of the patient pathway, analysing the improvements that can be made and thinking of all the resulting benefits in the process through making a relatively simple change in clinical practice.

At this point, Robert and Ian realised that the national pathway would benefit from adopting this change in approach to fixing surgical mesh in hernia operations. It was then that the pair approached NICE to develop an advice document to back up claims made about the product and give further momentum to project.

Working collaboratively with suppliers in the market and the clinicians treating patients, Robert and Ian managed to ensure the submission into NICE easily demonstrated the benefits backed up by clinical evidence gained from across the globe from a wide range of sources. A truly multi-disciplined stakeholder group has led to this guidance being published in a short space of time.

The NICE MedTech Innovation Briefing advice was published in July 2022 and includes the potential benefits concluded in the clinical project:

- Reduced postoperative and chronic pain.
- Fewer postoperative complications, such as nerve injury.
- Reduced risk of hernia recurrence.
- Reduced length of hospital stays, with the financial savings that brings.
- Earlier return to work and usual activities.
- Improved patient quality of life.

The briefing also highlights the innovative aspects of using cyanoacrylate glue:

Compared with fibrin-based (biologic) glues, which have lower adhesive strengths, synthetic cyanoacrylate-based technologies use less glue and need less time for setting. Fibrin glues must also be refrigerated during storage, whereas cyanoacrylate glue can be stored at room temperature. There have also been innovative developments in the tools used to apply the glues to make them easier to use and make delivery more accurate. Some applicators require manual assembly before use. Others are preloaded and only require activation or priming before use.

MedTech Innovation Briefings are designed to support NHS and social care commissioners and staff who are considering using new medical devices and other medical or diagnostic technologies. They are designed to be fast, flexible and responsive to the need for information on innovative technologies and help avoid the need for organisations to produce similar information locally, saving staff time and resources.

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However, the publication of the guidance is just the first part of the story for this particular project as there are other financial, or efficiency benefits available to trusts by switching from tackers to glue.

The next step in this project is for the team to establish the financial benefits to adopting glues. Initial assessments, backed up by engagement with leading surgeons in the field, show a £8,997.63 benefit to the system for every complex case and £1,306.46 for every simple case with an all-round improved patient experience.

Robert and Ian have subsequently developed a patient pathway document where directors of finance and procurement at NHS trusts can see at-a-glance the potential financial savings and long-term benefits of using glues as opposed to tackers.

In addition, preventing patients returning to GPs or hospitals with pain caused by the tackers put in their bodies during a hernia operation, would lead to significant financial savings from repeat appointments and frees up the time of those clinicians to deal with other patients.

A further development led by the team in the future will be to examine, outside of hernias, what other uses these glues can have and what other innovative products are out there in the medtech world that can offer similar benefits.

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