

Running an Adolescent Clinic in a District General Hospital

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BACKGROUND

- Adolescents are poorly served by the NHS, often falling between paediatric and adult services. To address this perceived need, a dedicated Adolescent clinic was set up in 2011.

THE SETTING

- Salisbury District Hospital is a medium-sized DGH in SW England, serving a rural population of about 50 000 children. It provides a full range of secondary paediatric services. The Adolescent clinic is held in the Children's Outpatient department.

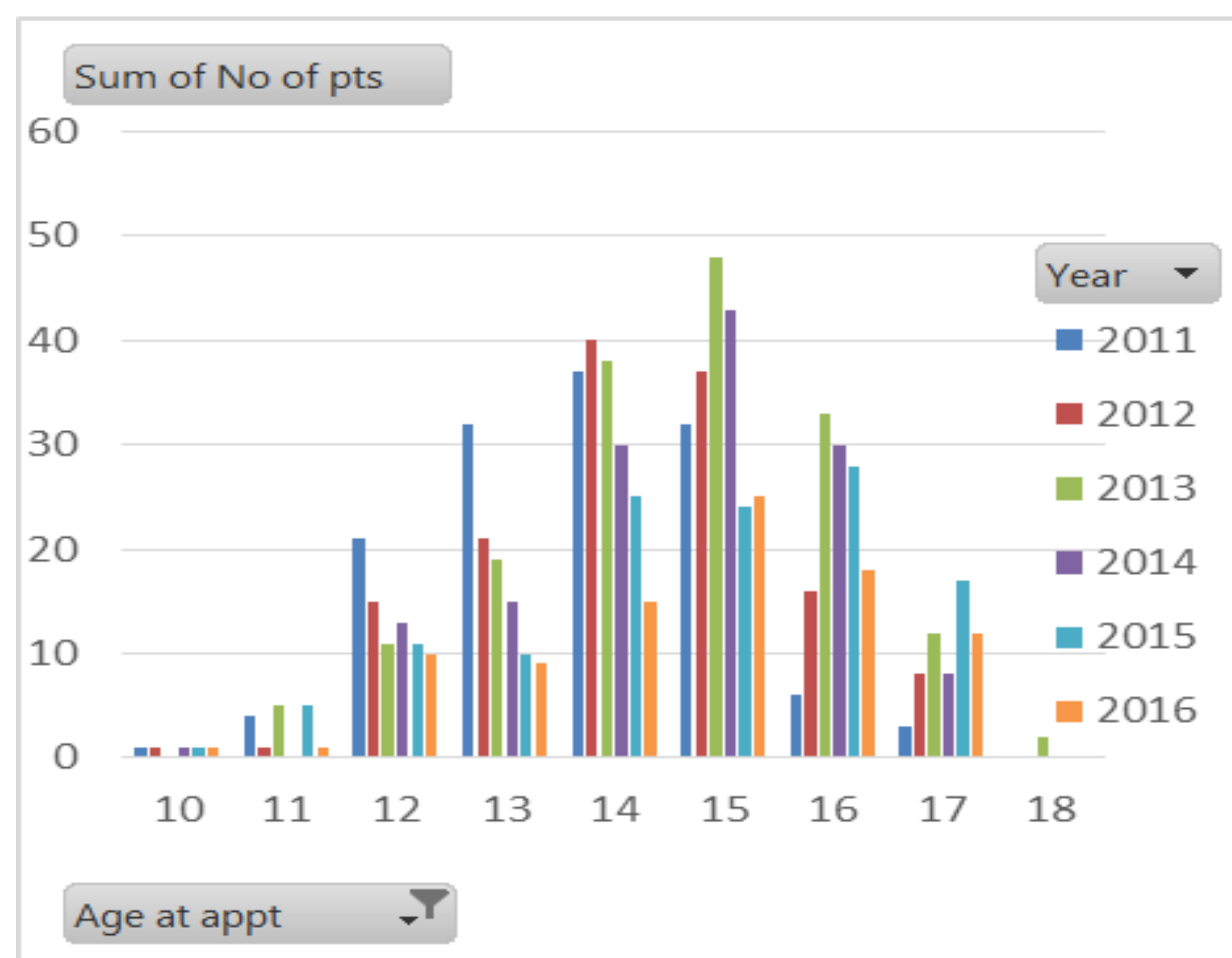


THE CLINIC

- The clinic is led by a consultant paediatrician and held fortnightly
- Appointment times are 15.00 to 18.30 to minimise time off school or college for attenders.
- Young people age 11 to 17 years attend, irrespective of the nature of their problem, unless there is a clear need to attend a specialist clinic

WHO ATTENDS ?

- Over 5 years there were 815 attendances by 441 young people (68% female).
- Referrals:
 - From primary care through self-selection within the age criteria ('Choose and Book') 69%
 - Direct from GPs 23%
 - Other consultants and ward follow-ups 5%
- Discharged after first appointment 34%
- Follow-up: new ratio 1.3:1
- Non-attendance rate 14%
- Referred to tertiary paediatric service 7%
- Referred to secondary adult service: 4%
- Referred to CAMHS 6%



PATIENT SURVEY

- 23 responses from random sample of attenders:
 - General atmosphere 'good' or 'excellent' 78%
 - Prefer after-school appointment times 52%
 - Satisfied with age-appropriate communication 100%

TYPES OF PROBLEMS SEEN

- New referrals:
 - Musculoskeletal 13%
 - Respiratory 7%
 - Gastrointestinal 7%
- Follow-ups:
 - Fatigue/CFS 26%
 - Musculoskeletal 5%
 - Neurological 5%
- Many also had psychological and behavioural problems, or eating disorders.



CONCLUSION

- A non-specialist generic adolescent clinic fulfils an unmet need in a DGH
- Setting up and running it is straightforward
- Patients requiring specialist input can be triaged as to their suitability for adult or paediatric referral
- Young people attending express a high degree of satisfaction