

Scottish Obstetric Cardiology Network

Annual Report

2022/23

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Introduction

The Scottish Obstetric Cardiology Network (SOCN) was established on 1 September 2018 in response to the MBRRACE-UK report, "Saving Lives, Improving Mothers' Care", published in December 2016, which highlighted that cardiac disease remains the leading indirect cause of death in pregnancy.

The aim of the network is to facilitate clinical and other improvements in the area of obstetric cardiology. The network encompasses care for women who either have a pre-existing cardiac condition before pregnancy or go on to develop cardiac conditions during pregnancy.

The development of pathways, guidelines and documentation to support the delivery of services that are evidence based has been prioritised by the network. This will improve outcomes for women with cardiac disease and support implementation of optimal care to any women with a cardiac condition who is contemplating a pregnancy or has a pregnancy in Scotland. Where relevant, SOCN continues to collaborate with other Networks, Societies, Organisations and Policy Teams to increase awareness of cardiac obstetrics and develop guidance, standards and support implementation.

The network facilitates collaboration within and across the multi-disciplinary teams involved in a woman's care at local, regional and national levels. This work is being supported through the development of a data set and data collection programme to identify areas for improvement.

Current Position

The network has completed 18 of 23 (78%) of its objectives in the 2022/23 workplan.

The Network has been without a substantive Lead Clinician since October 2022 and this has had a significant impact on the progress made this year. Following an unsuccessful round of recruitment in October 2022 the post will now be readvertised in May 2023.

Due to competing clinical priorities there have been significant delays in finalising the SOCN guidelines and pathways with consultation on these documents carried forward to 2023/24. The project to develop an online Heart Disease in Pregnancy module for healthcare professionals resumed in September 2022 but delays in outlining the content and governance issues around this have impacted on progress made and this work will continue in 2023/24.

Circumstances out with the Network control, have led to a delay in the development of the SOCN PowerApp. Development commenced in December 2022 with user testing anticipated to take place in April 2023. Issues with the database behind the PowerApp were identified before user testing could take place and the project is currently paused pending resolution of these issues.

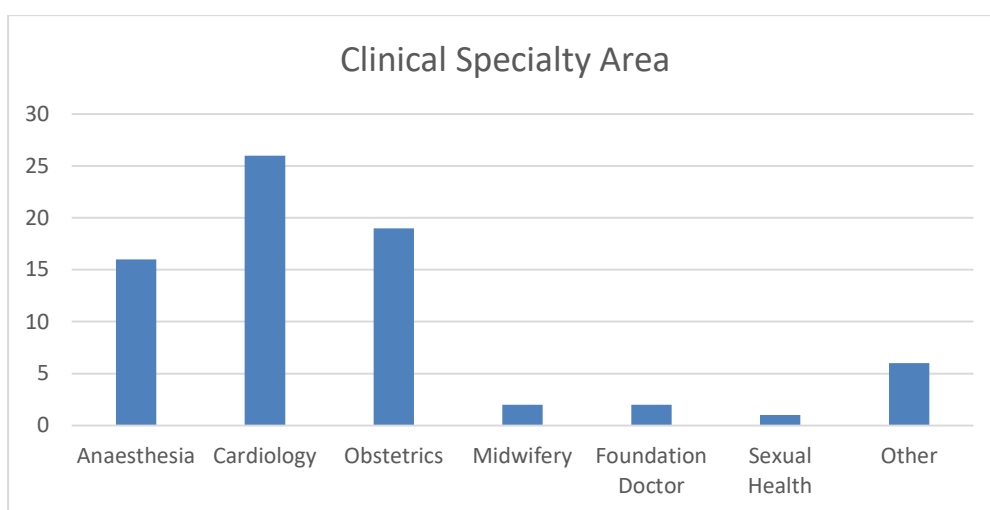
The Network continued to make use of technology and remote communications to progress work this year. This has continued to be effective, saving time on travel and promoting economic and climate friendly practices.

Highlights

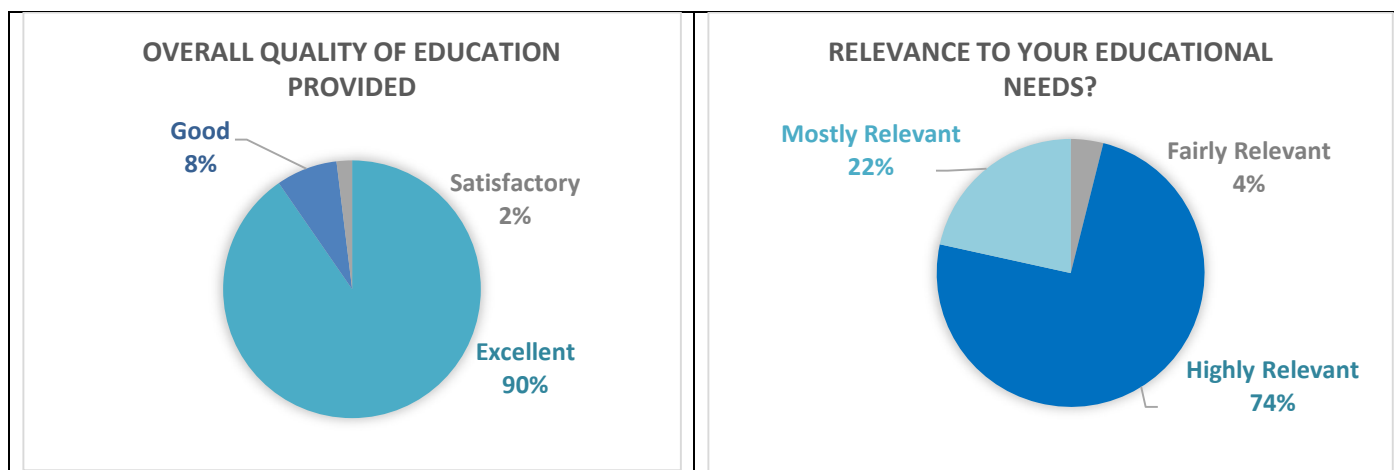
Education

Education is a core objective for all Managed Clinical Networks and a key action within SOCN Education Strategy is to host an annual symposium for staff supporting cardiac obstetric care in Scotland.

This year's event took place virtually on 24th June 2022 and included a mix of presentations and case-based MDT discussions. The event was attended by 75 people across a range of clinical specialty areas as shown below. Staff attending represented 10 health boards from across Scotland in addition to a number of people who attended from NHS England and overseas.



Evaluation forms were completed by 51 attendees (68% response rate). Feedback on the event was very positive with 100% respondents agreeing that information was well presented, 96% agreeing that the speakers communicated effectively and 88% agreeing that there was suitable time for discussion. In relation to the effectiveness of the event the majority of respondents rated the quality of education as excellent and relevant to their education needs.



In response to how the event would impact on future practice respondents highlighted that the event had *'improved their awareness of cardiac disease in pregnancy'*, given them an understanding of *'how to manage certain patients when they present in the peri-natal period'*, and that they would *'share resources with patients and colleagues'*.

In addition to the Annual Symposium, the Network hosted an online Clinical Case Discussion session on 28th October 2022. This event was attended by 28 people of which 15 completed an evaluation form (54% response). Feedback from this event is noted below:



In response to how the event would impact future practice respondents highlighted that the event would allow them to make *'better informed decision making and knowledge regarding anaesthesia in pregnancy'* and had given them *'improved confidence in assessing and communicating risk in pre-pregnancy counselling and with pregnant patients with cardiac disease'*.

The feedback received from both events, including format and suggested topics for future events, was considered by the Networks Communications and Education Subgroup to inform planning for the education events planned for the coming year.

Patient Information

The Network has been reviewing information available for people affected by cardiac conditions in pregnancy and will soon publish a range of new patient information materials:

- Symptoms in pregnancy – what is normal and what is not?
- Pregnancy with a Cardiac Implantable Electronic Device (CIED)
- What is the pre-pregnancy counselling clinic?

- Contraception and pregnancy with a heart condition – what do teenagers need to know?
- Contraception and pregnancy with a heart condition – what do parents need to know?

These materials have been developed following consultation with network members, including the SOCN patient forum, and have been reviewed by the Plain English Campaign. Further patient information materials are required and will be taken forward in 23/24.

Raising awareness and stakeholder engagement

The Lead Clinician (LC) and members of the Steering Group and sub-committees continue an intensive programme of awareness, education, and competency development.

- *Policy and strategy in Scotland*

The LC represents SOCN at the National Heart Disease Task Force (NHDTF). As chair of the heart health subgroup of Scotland's Women's Health Plan, the LC now sits on the Implementation Board for the Women's Health Plan and women's heart health sub-group of NHDTF. This supports increased awareness and a national platform for dissemination of SOCN output. In January 2023 'Women's Health Plan: A Report on Progress' was published by the Chief Medical Officer directorate. In this report the work of SOCN was highlighted along with our website¹. The LC and member of the SG also contributed to the development of a women's heart page on NHS Inform².

- *Development of national guidance & competencies*

As SOCN link to the UK Maternal Cardiac Society, the LC contributed to the expansion of obstetric cardiology competencies in the 2022 Curriculum for Cardiology Training. In addition, the LC represented SOCN in the writing of 'Best Practice Recommendations for Assisted Reproduction in Patients with Known Cardiac Disease or at High Risk of Cardiac Disease' currently submitted for publication. Dr Niki Walker, Dr Lorna Swan and Dr Julia Anderson all contributed to the 'British Society for Haematology guideline for anticoagulant management of pregnant individuals with mechanical heart valves'³.

Expanding awareness and general competence in cardiac obstetrics has been central to the work of SOCN. The LC was co-author of 'The Core Curriculum for Cardiovascular Nurses and Allied Professionals' published by the European Society of Cardiology Association of Cardiovascular Nurses and Allied Professionals. For the first time this curriculum contained a section dedicated to 'the pregnant patient with cardiovascular symptoms or disease'. The publication of this curriculum will be followed by educational modules and certification. Transforming Nursing Roles in Cardiology Subgroup have developed the competencies required for a band 7 clinical nurse specialist. Again, this now includes core knowledge and competencies in cardiac obstetrics. The LC has developed similar credentials for cardiology practitioners for Health Education England and the Royal College of Physicians.

- *Regional standards of care in Scotland*

Health Improvement Scotland's Regional Standards for Congenital Heart Disease Care in Scotland have been developed with SOCN representation. Standards for preconception care and pregnancy management have been written and will soon be available for consultation. This

provides additional guidance for Health Boards in implementing SOCN outputs including pathways of care and guidance.

- *Collaboration within NHS Scotland*

Collaboration with NES has been pivotal to increased awareness of cardiac presentations in pregnancy. The LC continues to work closely with the Scottish Multiprofessional Maternity Development Programme. They were also approached to by a leading maternity educational platform to develop a bespoke training programme in cardiac obstetrics for midwives which is currently underway.

SOCN has continued to ensure close collaboration with relevant National Networks. In 2022 SOCN collaborated with the Network for Inherited Cardiac Conditions Scotland (NICCS) to develop 'Clinical Guidelines for the Management of Long QTS in pregnancy'. This was presented at the SOCN symposium in June 2022. The SOCN LC and Dr Swan also presented at NICCS education events in 2022. The Fertility Network LC and SOCN LC met to determine overlap between the Networks to facilitate awareness, education and multi-disciplinary working. The Fertility Network LC is due to present some of this at the SOCN symposium in June 2023.

- *Presentations*

The LC and SG members continue to present on a national and international forum. Presentations about cardiac obstetrics and the work of SOCN have been presented at:

- European Society of Cardiology Annual Congress & webinar
- British Association of Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation
- Irish Nursing Cardiovascular Association
- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons Glasgow
- Cardiowebsinar
- Cross Party Working Group for Heart Disease & Stroke
- National Prevention Conference, Ireland
- Association for European Paediatric & Congenital Cardiology
- ESC Association of Cardiovascular Nurses and Allied Professions
- Scottish Cardiac Society
- Network for Inherited Cardiac Conditions Scotland
- British Society for Heart Failure
- Little Hearts Matter Patient Conference

Looking forward – 2023/24

A key priority for the year ahead is to launch the guidelines/pathways and support the implementation of these. Key to this will be considering the implications these will have on the non-specialist workforce and discussions around this are due to take place with NHS Scotland planning colleagues prior to their launch.

Following the launch of the algorithm ‘*Assessment Algorithm for Pregnant & Postpartum Women Presenting with Signs & Symptoms of Cardiovascular Disease*’, an audit is due to take place in three centres across Scotland to assess the impact of this.

The publication of the guidelines/pathways and a new Lead Clinician coming into post gives the opportunity to consider the strategic vision of the network for the next 3-5 years and the structure required to support this. Linked to this a refresh of the Communication, Education, Quality Strategies is planned.

Education will continue to be a key focus of network activity with the 2023 symposium taking place as a hybrid event on 16th June. An online Clinical Case Discussion session will take place in November 2023 and a Registrar Training Event is being planned for February 2024. Consideration will also be given on how best to support the continuing education of midwives.

There is a need to continue to expand the information available for women of reproductive age with heart disease and collaborating with third sector in their dissemination.

Finance

The itemised costs and total spend for 2022/23 is given below. Payment for the Network Symposium in June 2023 Symposium venue has been attributed to the 2022/23 spend.

Detail Code	Spend
Plain English review of Patient Information Leaflets	£1,050
Exhibition/Conferences	£1,400
• Symposium June 2023	
TOTAL SPEND	£2,450

Risks & Issues

The delivery of the 2023/24 workplan will be impacted on any further delay in recruiting to the position of Lead Clinician. To support interest in this post, the role is being readvertised on the basis of 2 PA sessions for the first year.

References

- 1: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/progress-report/2023/01/womens-health-plan-report-progress/documents/womens-health-plan-report-progress/womens-health-plan-report-progress/govscot%3Adocument/womens-health-plan-report-progress.pdf>
- 2: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/womens-health/middle-years-around-25-to-50-years/womens-heart-health/womens-heart-health/>
- 3: <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjh.18781>
- 4: <https://doi.org/10.1093/eurjcn/zvad035>