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“Pilot Assessment of Cleft Lip and Palate Patients at Children’s Hospital in New Orleans”

Background: Clefts of the lip and palate (CL/P) are among the most common congenital structural anomalies, and various surgical and rehabilitative interventions are started as a neonate and continued throughout adolescence. A child with CL/P is treated by a multidisciplinary team of specialists over the course of his or her physical, psychosocial, and cognitive development. Thus, outcomes research in cleft care has traditionally been fraught with complexity, due to the longitudinal and multidisciplinary care that is required. Additionally, CL/P can have significant and lasting impacts on the quality of life of both the patient and his or her family, particularly in the financial, social, and familial domains.

Objectives: Using a standardized set of outcomes developed by the cleft care team at a large regional Craniofacial center, this project retrospectively assessed the cleft patient population at Children’s Hospital in New Orleans, Louisiana (CHNOLA), from March of 2018 through March of 2020. This assessment was intended to characterize the specific cleft patient population at this cleft center. More specifically, the current study aimed to evaluate patient demographic factors, as well as the distribution of cleft anomalies for this patient population.

Methods: In order to assess this patient population, a retrospective analysis was performed using both Redcap and EPIC medical record interfaces. ICD-10 codes that correlated with anomalies of the lip and palate were utilized to generate a sample from EPIC of 485 patients evaluated at Children’s Hospital in New Orleans, Louisiana, from March of 2018 through March 2020. The list of 485 patients was then cross-referenced with a database of orofacial cleft patients tracked in Redcap from March of 2018 through March 2020. This process yielded a sample of 424 cleft lip and palate patients with Redcap information regarding patient demographics and cleft characterization. Excel worksheets were then used to perform a basic pilot assessment of this patient population.

Results: Assessment indicated that 50.2% of the 424 patients in Redcap did not have race information available. 211 patients with race identification available identify as the following: 50.7% White Non-Hispanic, 25.6% African American Non-Hispanic, 10.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 10.9% Hispanic, 1.4% Other, and 0.5% Native American. 89.6% of patients reside in Louisiana, 8.3% in Mississippi, 1.4% in Alabama, 0.4% in Texas, and 0.3% in Florida. 34.7% of patients did not have insurance information available. 278 patients with payor status available indicated their utilization as 79.5% Medicaid, 17.6% Private, 1.8% Medicare, and 1.1% Other or Freecare. 10.1% of patients presented with another form of orofacial cleft (OFC). Of the 381 patients with CL/P, 43.1% presented with CP, 31.6% with unilateral CL/P, 10.7% with bilateral CL/P, 10.4% with unilateral CL, and 4.2% with bilateral CL. 55.0% of patients identify as male and 45.0% of patients identify as female. Patient identified as female presented with 47.1% CP, 28.3% CL/P, 13.1% CL and 11.5% OFC. Patients identified as male presented with 49.7% CL/P, 28.8% CP, 12.5% CL, and 9.0% OFC.

