

Effects of Covid-19 restrictions on the number of Patients Requiring Admission With Tonsillitis to Victoria Hospital, Fife

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Background

- Tonsillitis, along with peritonsillar abscess (PTA), are two of the most common emergencies¹.
- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, national lockdown was commenced on the 23rd of March 2020. This led to a dramatic decrease in patients being admitted to the Victoria Hospital Kirkcaldy with tonsillitis/PTA.
- A single cycle audit was performed to determine how the COVID-19 pandemic had effected the number of admissions compared to the same pre-pandemic period.

Criteria	2019 Period	2020 Period
Males	37	7
Females	42	8
Total Number	79	15
Age Range	4-73	17-44
Tonsillitis	37 (47%)	11(73%)
PTA	42(53%)	4 (27%)

Table 1. Data comparing the gender, total number, mean age, number and percentage of tonsillitis and PTS for both pre-pandemic and post-pandemic numbers.

Methodology

- A single cycle audit was performed. Retrospective data collection was performed by analysing ward lists and the ward admission book to document any patients admitted with tonsillitis/PTA.
- The data collected for two 7- month periods; April 2019 – October 2019 (pre-pandemic) vs April 2020 – October 2020 (lock down period).
- Data documented: tonsillitis/PTA, gender, age.
- Collected data of 2019 was compared to that of 2020 to see if the pandemic and lock down had impacted admission numbers

References: Thamboo A, Lea J, Sommer DD, et al. Clinical evidence based review and recommendations of aerosol generating medical procedures in otolaryngology - head and neck surgery during the COVID-19 pandemic. *J Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg.* 2020;**49**:28.

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Results

- The majority of those admitted were admitted pre-pandemic; 79 vs 15.
- The age range of those admitted pre-pandemic includes a wider age spectrum.
- PTA was more common in pre-pandemic admissions. With 53% of pre-pandemic admissions being for a PTA. Post-pandemic admissions showed more admissions being for tonsillitis alone.
- Post-pandemic admission numbers for those admitted with tonsillitis +/- PTA saw an overall decrease (See Fig.1).

Number of Inpatients Admitted With Tonsilitis 2019 vs 2020

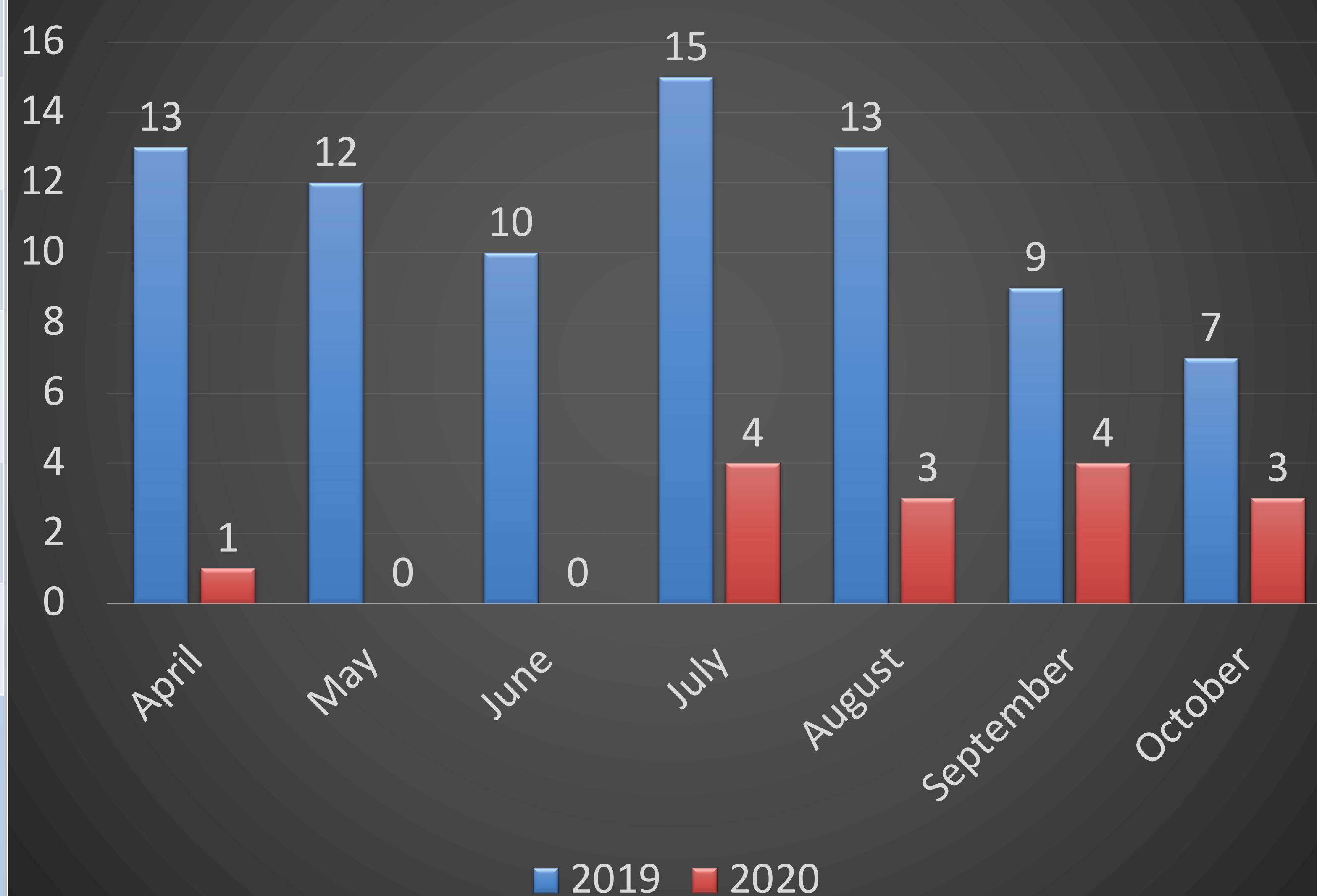


Figure 1. Number of inpatients admitted to VHK between April 2019-October 2019 vs April 2020-October 2020 with Tonsillitis +/- Peritonsillar abscess.

Conclusions

- The 2020 post pandemic period saw a dramatic reduction in the numbers of patients being admitted with tonsillitis. The reasons for this are likely dependent upon a multitude of factors:
 - 1) **Reduced exposure:** social distancing, stay home message, mask wearing, improved hand washing.
 - 2) **Reduced presentation to health services:** stay home message, self quarantining, exposure anxiety.
 - 3) **Reduced diagnosis:** less face to face consultations, less intra-oral examinations.
- Of note, there was no increase in those being admitted with more advanced presentations (Eg: deep neck space collection/airway issues) during the lock down period.