

## **IMPACT AND ADVANTAGES TO PATIENTS OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOINT THYROID CLINIC IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THYROID NODULES - A CANADIAN EXPERIENCE.**

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**Background/Purpose:** The incidence of thyroid cancer is increasing worldwide, with resulting increase in referrals to specialists.

Referral wait times in the Canadian system can involve travelling problems for the patients and delays in diagnosis, treatment and follow up.

**Methods:** In Feb 2012, a multidisciplinary clinic was established, in which "one stop" access to surgeon, medical endocrinologist and ultrasound/FNAC was provided for the patient with a thyroid nodule, from the time of first referral.

The ultrasound service and FNAC were provided in the same office.

We compared the results for patients (n = 118, Group A) after the multidisciplinary clinic was established upto Feb 2013 (12 months) with a control group (n = 82, Group B) which did not have access to the multidisciplinary format.

**Results:** We found significant improvements in all the parameters under the study except time from first referral to clinic appointment : Mean time from clinic appointment to ultrasound examination, Group A vs Group B = 1 : 16 (p< 0. 01). Mean time from ultrasound to FNAB = 1:14 (P<0. 05). Mean time from postoperative surgical follow up to medical endocrinologist clinic appointment = 1: 18 (p<0. 01). Mean of total number of kilometers traveled Group A vs Group B = 44 : 286 (p < 0. 05). And mean of time from first referral to clinic appointment = 14 : 16 (p > 0. 05).

**Discussion & Conclusion:** The multidisciplinary joint thyroid clinic with office ultrasound in the same sitting has significant advantages to the patient. Wait times for consecutive appointments are eliminated and the logistics for the patient greatly simplified.