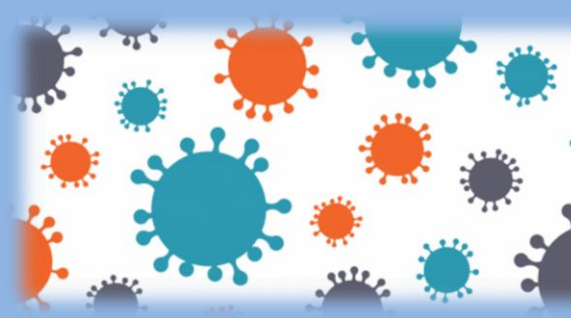




NHS and the impact of Covid-19

NHS

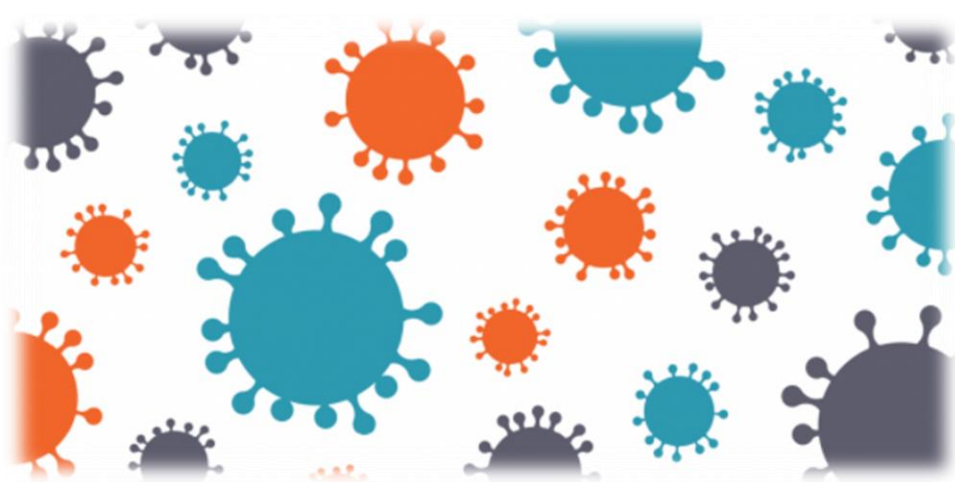


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Introduction

COVID-19 has had a big impact on the National Health Service (NHS). The demand for elective medical care and ICU (Intensive Care Units) has increased unexpectedly. The demand for services increased drastically and the supply couldn't meet these needs. This led to the complete use of all the available medical equipment of NHS hospitals, rearrangement of medical facilities, redesign of service structure, hiring more staff to fight the Coronavirus pandemic. This report will outline the changes in NHS due to this pandemic and the NHS transformation, the new recruitment strategy, and the new operational processes to face all the challenges due to the Covid-19 outbreak.



Changes Taken Place in NHS due to COVID-19

NHS is one of the four national healthcare systems in the United Kingdom that provides medical services to the residents of the UK (Worthington, Britton, and Thompson, 2018). It provides the majority of medical services in England, including primary care, in-patient care, long-term healthcare, eye care, and dental care. After the COVID-19 outbreak, the NHS has faced a big challenge. All the past strategies of providing service became worthless. Besides, a huge number of people are seeking service and started to come to hospitals. This number exceeded the capacity of all the hospitals under the NHS. Also, regular patients were admitted. The outspreading of the virus was increasing drastically as it is highly contagious. The death toll was also rising with a higher proportion. At that moment the whole country went into lockdown. A long time staying at home started to cause mental problems to the residents.

The demand for ICU beds has increased highly. The occupancy rate has broken all records. Because, Coronavirus affected some groups of the population more severely than others: men, aged individuals, and those from Asian and black ethnic groups were at increased risk of death (Pattani, 2020). So, they needed intensive care. There needs to a direct contact between patients and the doctors and medical staff to provide medical care. But it had become a big problem in providing service to the Corona patients. Because it is highly contagious. So, a new cost increased for the doctors and medical staff to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for them.

The infected patients exceeded the capacity of medical beds and it was increasing continuously (Khan and Naushad, 2020). So, an immediate step was needed to admit that a huge amount of patients. To give medical care to an unexpected number of patients a big number of medical staff needed.

A big number of people were expecting minor medical services from home via online mediums. To cover that NHS needed to set more doctors to help the people online. Also, it was needed to increase the server capacity so that people could get services without any trouble.

The invention of the vaccine has become a fire emergency for human civilization. So, NHS invested a big amount in the invention of the vaccine.

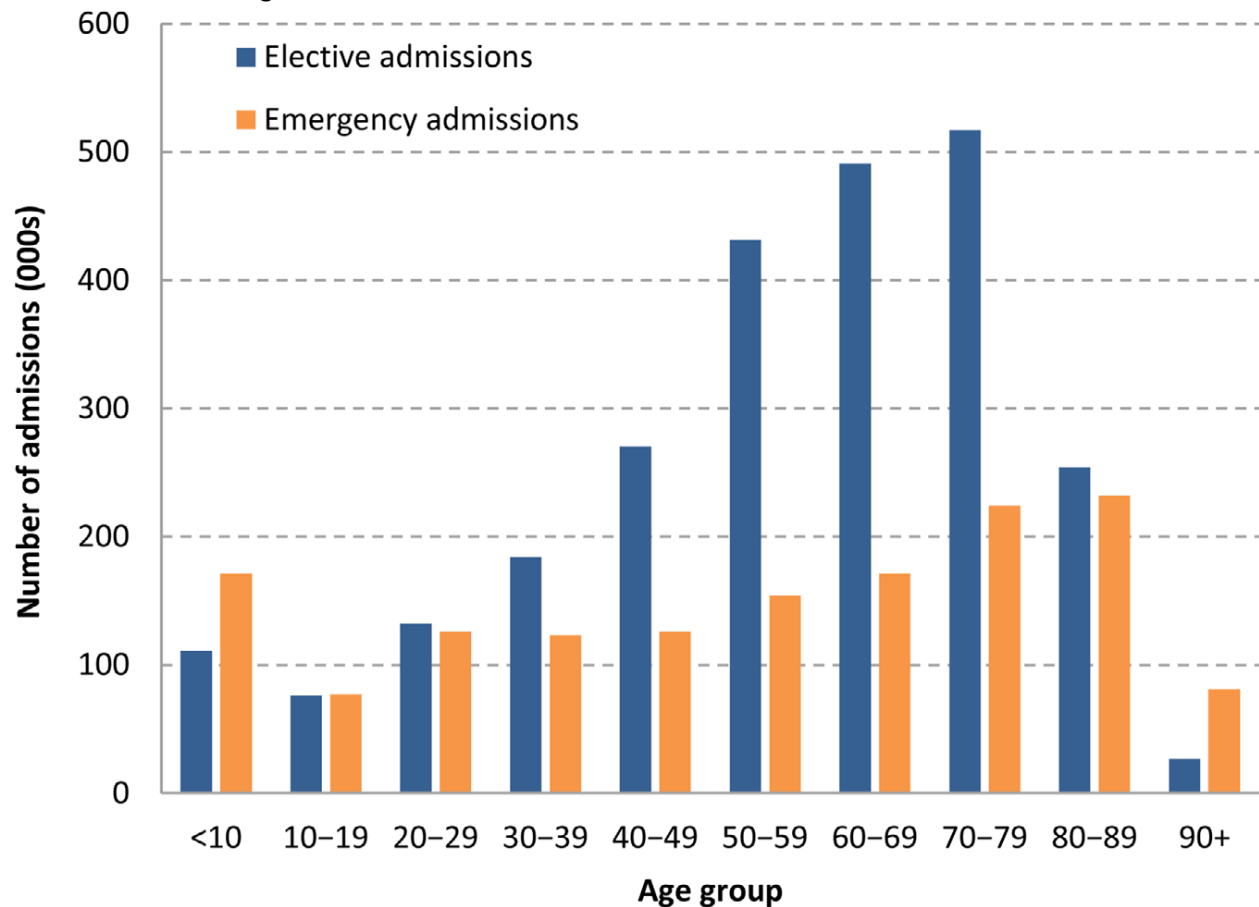


FIGURE 1

Number of elective and emergency admissions between April and June 2017,

By ten-year age group (Propper, Stoye and Zaranko, 2020)

PESTLE Analysis of the NHS in COVID-19

I will use PESTLE analysis which looks at the Political, Economic, Sociocultural, Technological, Legal, and Environmental factors affecting an organization to review the NHS's current and future operational standings in this COVID-19 situation (Redmon, Mawhinney and Johnson, 2019).

Political Factors

A political factor can affect the NHS in this corona pandemic. That is the ability of the government to fight against such a situation (Dessler, 2020). The oppositions always try to find out the guts of government. So, the government always tries to show the ability to them. Also, the international relations of the government affect the situation against the pandemic.

Economic Factors

Economic downturn

In this pandemic, the entire world has experienced an economic downturn (Khan and Naushad, 2020). Of course, the United Kingdom was in no way immune to this economic setback, and this is something that has impacted the NHS. In order to continue the activities NHS needs funding.

Sociocultural factors

Aging population

A common phenomenon is that of the aging population. As healthcare improves, the average age of the population is increasing. The mortality rate is also high in this pandemic. Because, they suffer from any kind of disease like Diabetes, high blood pressure, etc. As a result, the NHS facing an extra strain in this COVID-19 situation.

High patient expectations

The patients expect high-class medical care just as before in this pandemic situation, but it is not possible to provide that level of service in a high demand situation.

Technological Factors

Here is a Technological factor affecting the NHS in COVID-19:

Improved healthcare

With new technologies, medical services can be provided easily. The ventilator and other life-supporting technologies increased the ability of the medical system. The

testing technologies also increase the ability to detect the presence of COVID within a short time. Providing telemedicine service is possible only by using modern technologies. The NHS is affected by these technologies in providing services.

New Product Portfolio and Strategy

It had become mandatory to make a huge change in the service portfolio and strategy to fight COVID-19. NHS has taken new strategies and changed some services for this.

NHS established seven NHS Nightingale Hospitals in a very short time to provide medical care to the most infected patients. As we discussed earlier NHS faced a huge demand for medical care and medical bed and equipment (Yang and Ma, 2020). But space and available beds in the NHS medicals were insufficient to meet that demand. The admission of patients was 40 times more than usual. We can see this in Figure-2 graphically.

To meet that unexpected demand NHS established the NHS Nightingale Hospitals which increased the ability to serve the Corona infected people (Propper, Stoye and Zaranko, 2020). It increased the availability of a medical bed and equipment.

NHS brought back the recently retired medical staff and permitted the final year nursing students to join as staff. 7000 recently retired nurses return to their workplace within March 2020 and around 3000 final year nursing students were appointed as a nurse in the NHS hospitals (Williams, 2020). Besides, NHS reduced nurses to look after other regular patients and deploy them to look after the Coronavirus affected patients. The working time duration has increased for the doctors and nurses. As a result, they started facing health and mental pressure. A number of them are infected by the Coronavirus and some are suspected that they are infected (Hossain, 2020). So, they went to self-isolation and some others took leisure from the work. So, the need for doctors and nurses has increased in a greater proportion.

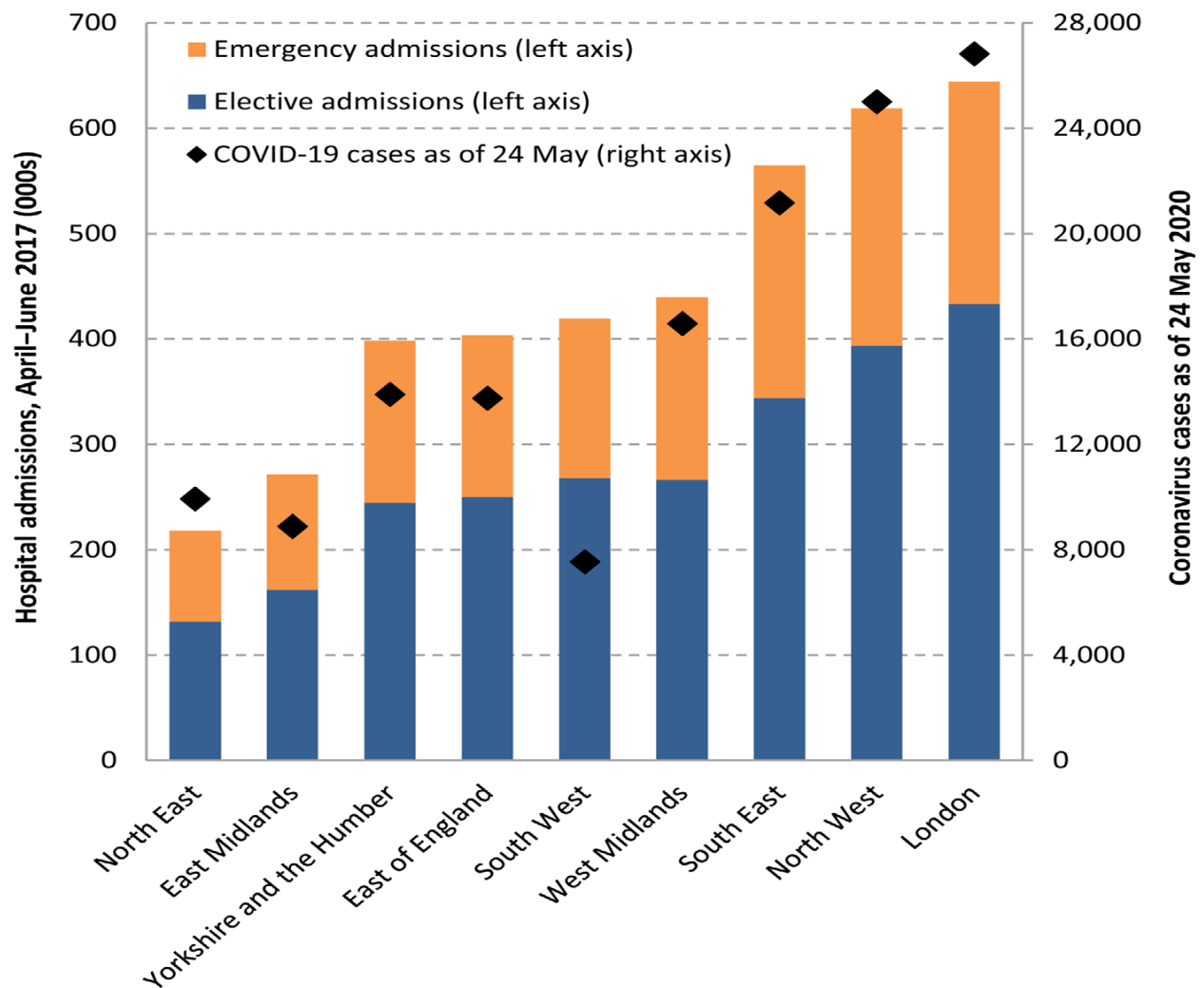


FIGURE 2

Total number of NHS elective and emergency admissions between April and June 2017, and Coronavirus cases as of 24 May 2020, by English region (Propper, Stoye and Zaranko, 2020)

For covering this, NHS changed its recruitment procedure and requirements. It has allowed the final year nursing students to join as a nurse and they wiped out the age requirement. Moreover, the retired nurses also joined as a nurse in their hospitals (Lundstrom, 2020).

NHS changed the strategy of treating Non-COVID patients. They planned to discharge the patients who are medically fit. Also, NHS reduced the number of surgeries in a big number (Yang and Ma, 2020).

Telemedicine service was emphasized with the help of websites and apps. NHS started to provide remote consultation via NHS App, NHS website, and online video call. It reduced the regular patients' pressure in hospitals (Propper, Stoye and Zaranko, 2020).

Also, NHS reduced resources for the non-Corona virus patients and employ them to serve Corona patients. It transferred equipment and other resources from the non-Corona ward to the COVID ward and the Nightingale hospitals (Yang and Ma, 2020).

NHS invested a huge amount in the production of vaccines, because the only vaccine can stop this pandemic. NHS conducted vaccine trials of Pfizer and BioNTech's Vaccine to the required areas and people (Williams, 2020).

Recruitment strategy, people and culture

After the outbreak of the Coronavirus, the NHS changed its recruitment strategy in a big manner. It started an online interview-based hiring process. It allowed final year nursing students to join as nurses. NHS shorten the recruitment process for the COVID-19 situation. Besides, it recruited again the recently retired medical staff.

The work culture of NHS also changed in the post-pandemic situation. Before that NHS used to serve all the patients as per their need for treatment. They always follow the first come first serve rule. Also, they never discharged any patient before being completely fit. But in this corona pandemic, NHS prioritize the corona infected patients highly. They reduced the treatment of non-corona virus patients. Also, NHS transferred resources from other wards to the COVID-19 wards. They discharged patients when they become medically fit. The number of surgery was decreased highly in this situation. On the other hand, NHS increased the shifting time of the doctors and medical staff over their interest.

Incentives to the employees in the post COVID situation in NHS have changed. The employees are getting paid more for their extra effort. Besides, NHS offers its employees various kind of facilities like discounted taxi rides, discounted meal delivery, data deals, and activities for children and families. Employees are getting a discount of up to 75% in many outlets and transportation services. Their families are also being benefitted from those offers.

Operational processes and systems

NHS adapted a new operation process and incorporated new systems in the post COVID situation. Before the Coronavirus pandemic, NHS hospitals were providing health care services to the people of the UK (Propper, Stoye, and Zaranko, 2020). They provide emergency medical care, elective care, etc. Also, NHS hospitals gave attention to the patients as per their needs. But in the Corona pandemic situation NHS hospitals have given the top priority to the Corona infected patients. They prioritize their needs for regular patients. NHS discharge most of the regular patients when they start filling fit. Besides, they decreased the number of surgeries (Yang and Ma, 2020). To serve the big number of Corona patients NHS established seven NHS Nightingale hospitals where only COVID infected people can get healthcare services. NHS started to provide regular medical consultancy services via online and mobile applications so that the pressure of regular non-corona patients decreases in the hospitals.

The Sustainability of New Operational processes and systems

These new operational processes and systems are very effective to fight the pandemic. The sudden increase of service-seeking people has covered up with these measures. These changes made the NHS able to face this type of situation in the future. The new processes are sustainable and NHS will be more confident to face any emergencies and take proactive measures for the future. In this pandemic, NHS has taken some new operational processes which will be continued in the future and will make its future path easy. But in the long run, when the pandemic ends many of these systems will not work anymore. Then a contingency plan will be needed to come back into normal service processes.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has exerted a severe effect on the National Health Services (NHS). The organization faced many problems to handle the situation, but it has taken many steps to fight the pandemic. NHS has changed its operations as per the needs of service seekers. It introduced a new service portfolio and strategy for coronavirus patients. To meet the huge demand NHS changed its recruitment processes and hired a huge number of medical staff. Besides, the operational processes many other strategies were updated by NHS during this situation. It can be said that NHS successfully adopted the COVID-19 outbreak and managed to adopt new measures, act quickly and fight for people's lives and health.



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