

# A missed opportunity? Colonoscopy withdrawal times in a large DGH

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## Introduction:

Colonoscopy is the gold standard investigation for identification of colorectal pathology. Published evidence has confirmed that a higher adenoma detection rate (ADR) is associated with lower rates of post colonoscopy cancer detection<sup>1,2</sup>. The ADR increases when withdrawal times from the caecum to the rectum are  $\geq 6$  minutes<sup>1,2</sup>. Even the most experienced endoscopists (defined as performing  $>10000$  colonoscopies) will miss adenomas if their withdrawal times are  $< 6$  minutes<sup>3</sup>.

## Guidelines:

National guidelines recommend a mean colonoscopy withdrawal time of  $\geq 6$  minutes from caecum to rectum<sup>3</sup>.

## Methodology:

Over a period of two weeks in 2017, endoscopy nurses across the three East Kent Hospitals (QEQM, KCH and WHH) recorded withdrawal times from the caecum to the rectum for all colonoscopy procedures.

The endoscopists were unaware that withdrawal times were being recorded.

## Results:

138 colonoscopies were performed. 29 were less than 6 minutes (21%) (Table 1).

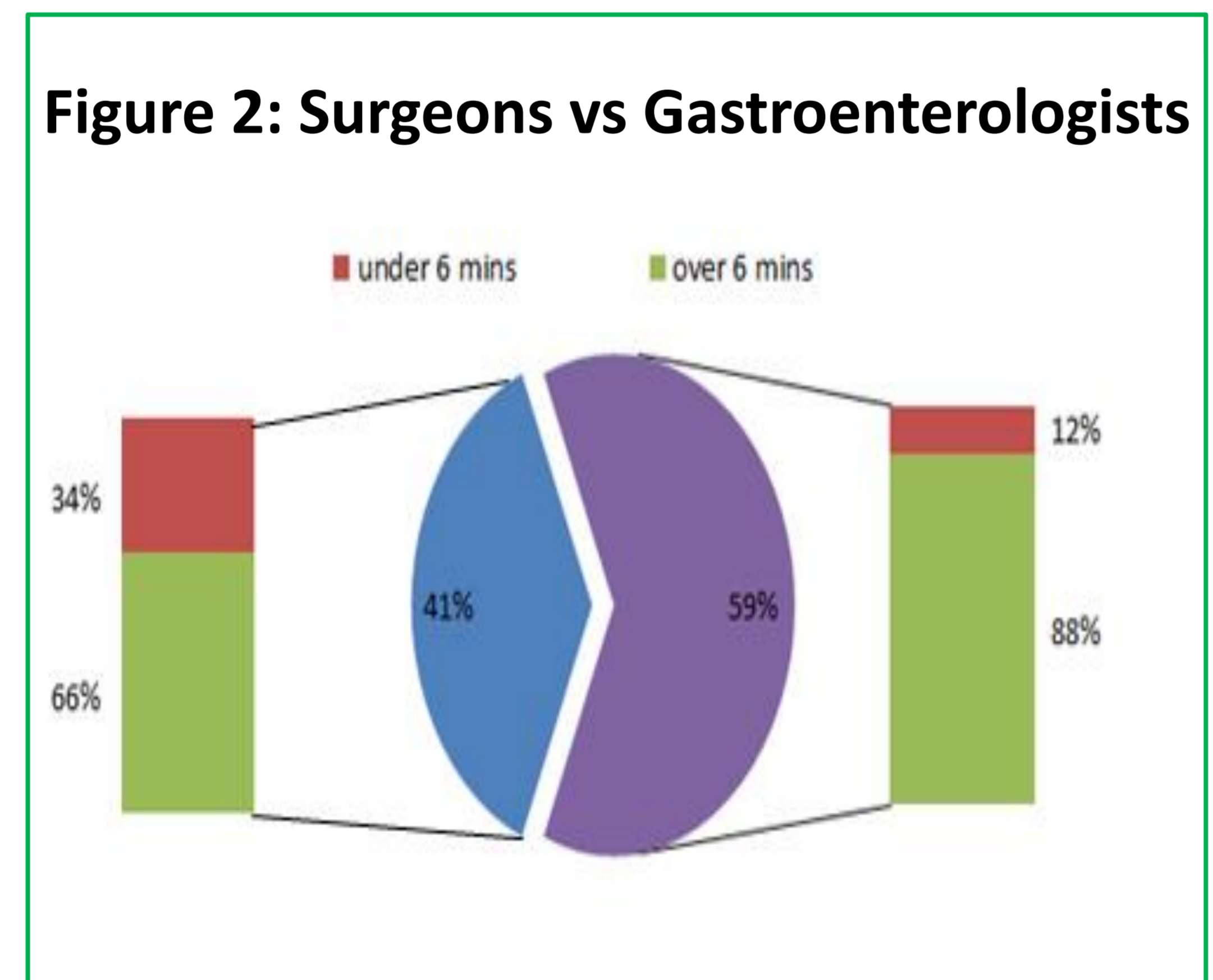
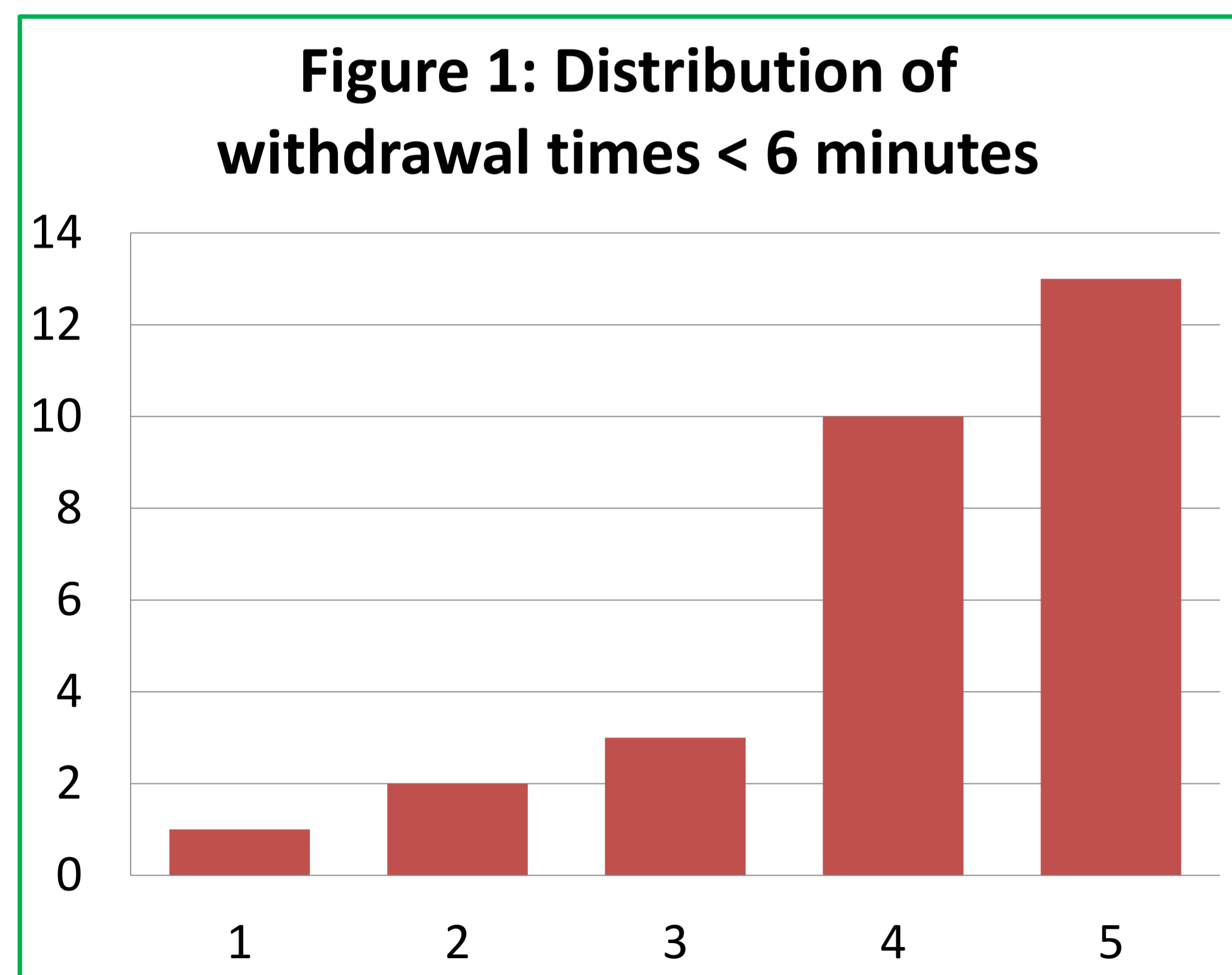


Table 1: Overview of results

Total number of procedures	138	
Total procedures with withdrawal times <6 minutes	21% (n=29)	
Frequency of procedures <6 minutes	5 minutes	13
	4 minutes	10
	3 minutes	3
	2 minutes	2
	1 minutes	1
Overall average withdrawal times +/- SD (minutes)	10.1 +/- 7.0	
Total procedures performed by gastroenterologists	Total procedures performed by surgeons	
	59% (n=82)	41% (n=56)
Procedures < 6 minutes	Procedures < 6 minutes	
	12.2% (n=10)	33.9% (n=19)
Mean withdrawal time for gastroenterologists +/- SD (minutes)	Mean withdrawal time for surgeons +/- SD (minutes)	
	11.7 +/- 7.9	8.1 +/- 4.9
Range of withdrawal times (minutes)	Range of withdrawal times (minutes)	
	40 to 2	30 to 1

## Conclusion:

21% of 138 colonoscopy procedures performed did not adhere to the minimal withdrawal time of 6 minutes as recommended in the best practice guidelines. If this finding were replicated across the UK, a significant amount of pathology may be missed increasing risks to our patients.

## References:

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3. Kumar S; Thosani N, Ladabaum U et al. *Adenoma miss rates associated with a 3-minute versus 6-minute colonoscopy withdrawal time: a prospective, randomised trial*. Gastrointestinal Endoscopy 2017; 85 : 1273-1280.
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