



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

The Effects of COVID on Routine Services

Richard Lilford

Prof Public Health, University of Birmingham

December 2021



Access to Hospital Care

In April 2020, 16 newspaper articles in the UK reported massive reductions in access:

Date	Source	Headline
06/04	<i>Guardian</i>	Fears that people self-isolating with Covid-19 may seek help too late.
06/04	<i>The Times</i>	Heart attack victims scared to seek help at A&E.
07/04	<i>Daily Mail</i>	ERs are seeing up to 60% fewer heart attack patients as those infected with coronavirus fill hospital beds but cardiac emergencies mysteriously 'disappear'.
09/04	<i>Telegraph</i>	A&E attendances at lowest point since records began amid corona virus outbreak.
10/04	<i>The Sun</i>	Lives at Risk: Cancer, heart attack and stroke patients avoiding A&E over coronavirus fears – as figures hit record low.
10/04	<i>The Times</i>	Fears for cancer, heart attack and stroke patients shunning A&E
16/04	<i>Guardian</i>	Warning as UK coronavirus outbreak leads to sharp rise in deaths at home
16/04	<i>Guardian</i>	Concern as heart and stroke patients delay seeking help
...



Normal Service is Suspended!

*“Patients with heart attacks, strokes ...
vanish from hospitals”.*

Bernstein & Stead Sellers.
Washington Post. April 19, 2020.

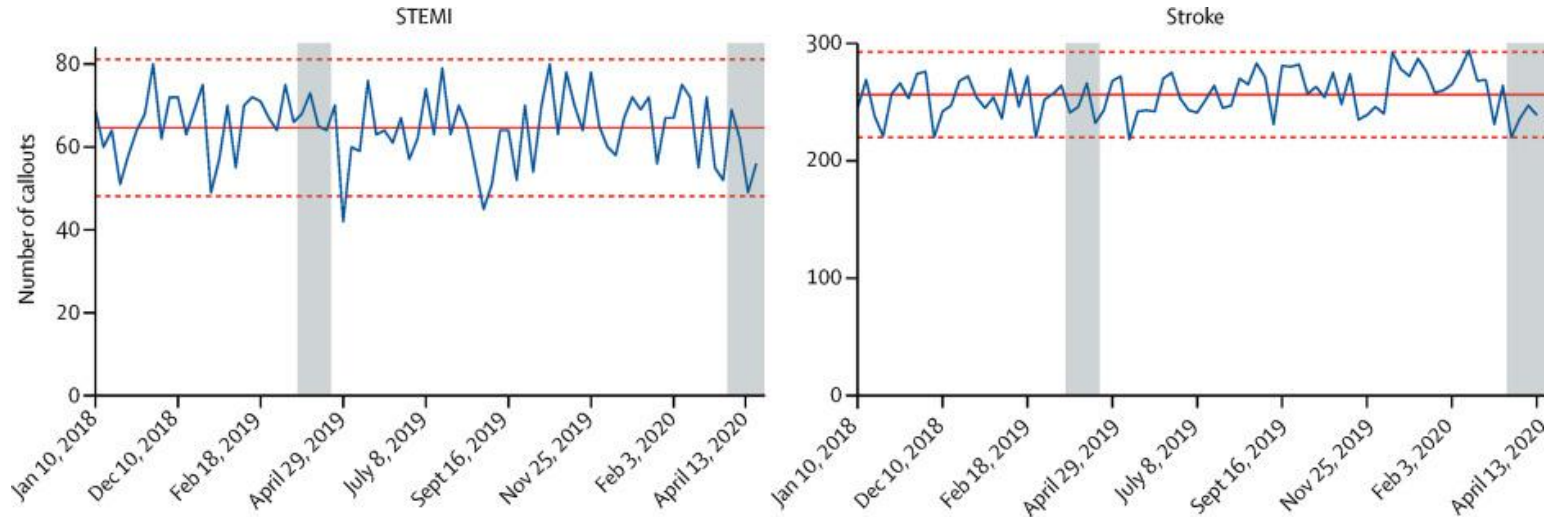


Barriers to Access

1. Health seeking
2. Transfer to facility
3. Within facilities



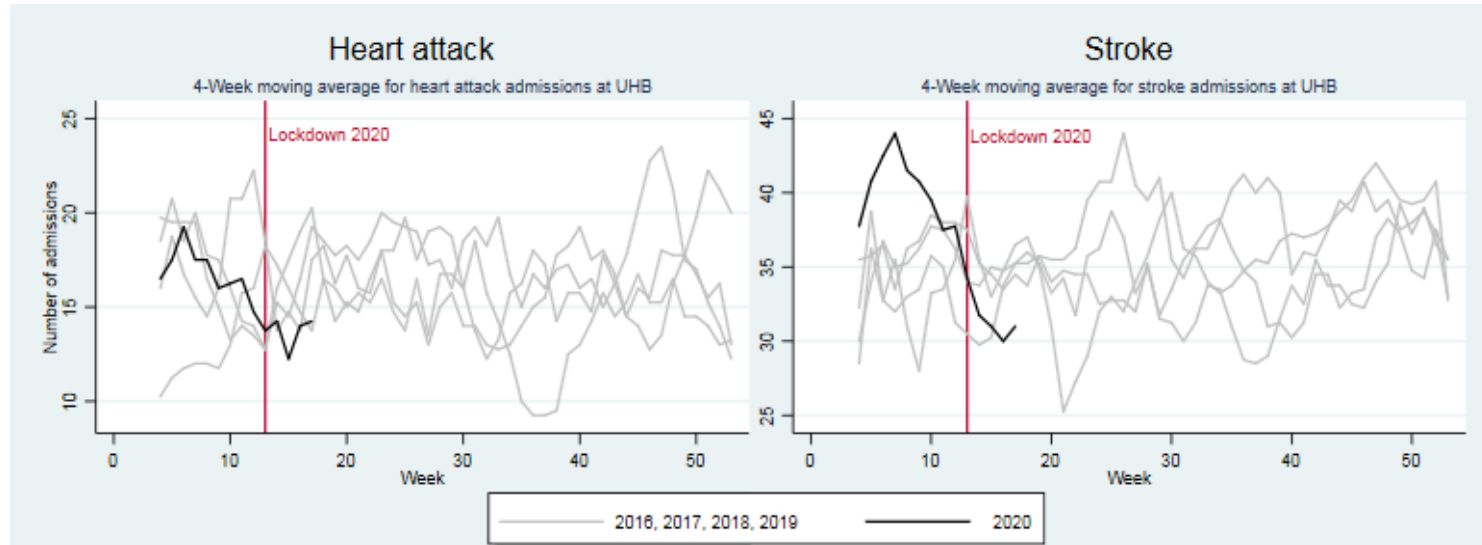
Barrier 1: Health Seeking – Emergency



West Midlands Ambulance Service – linear model – no structural break



Barrier 2: Reaching Service – Emergency



University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

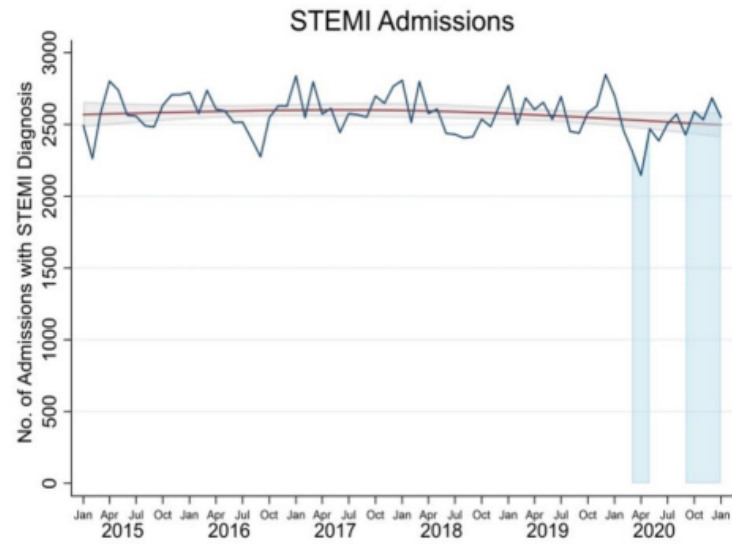
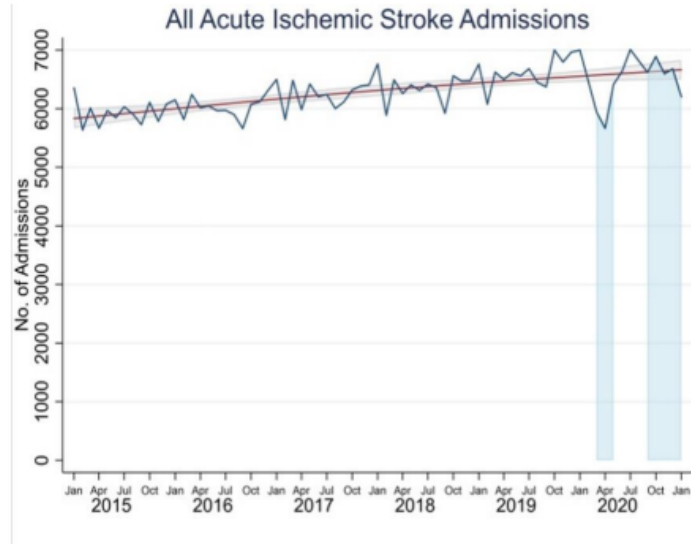


UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Reeves, Watson, Pankhurst, Khunti, Gallier, Skrybant, Chilton, Lilford. *MedRxiv*. 2020.

DOI:10.1101/2020.06.08.20119636.

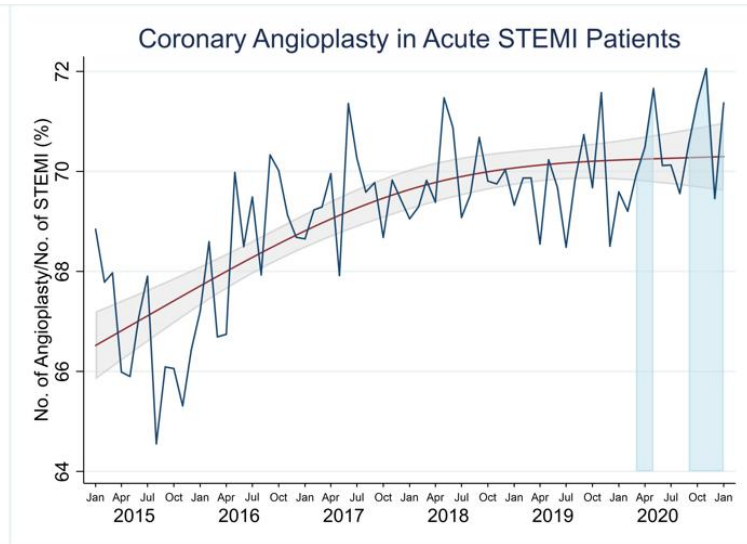
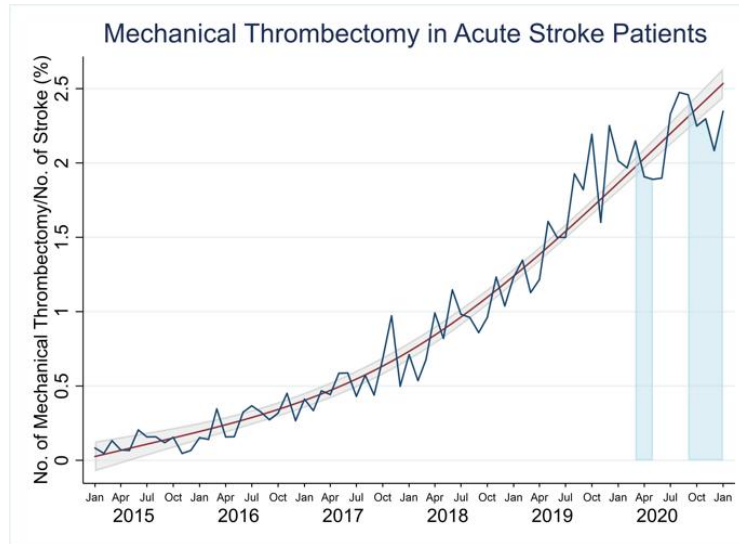
Barrier 2: Reaching Service – Emergency



Hospital admission with stroke or STEMI over time: Hospital Episode Statistics



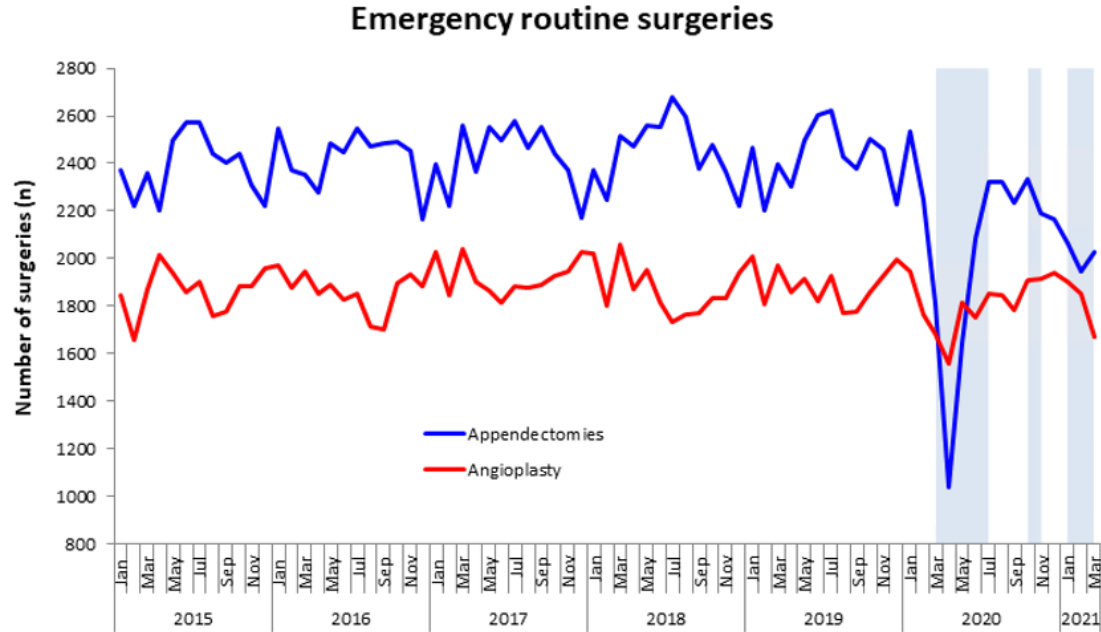
Barrier 3: Getting Treatment – Emergency



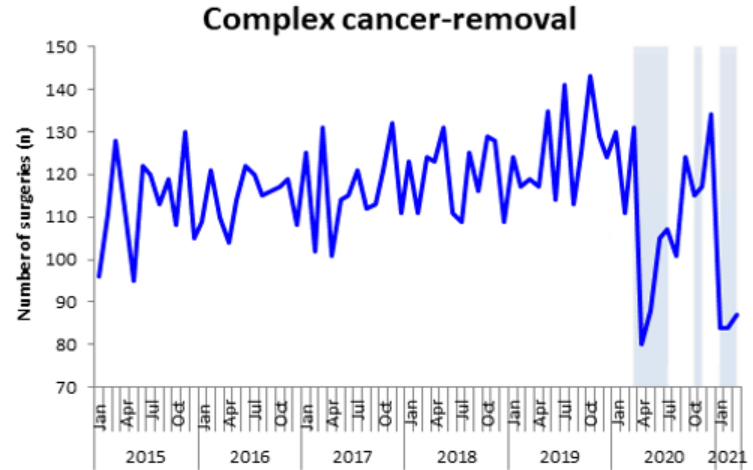
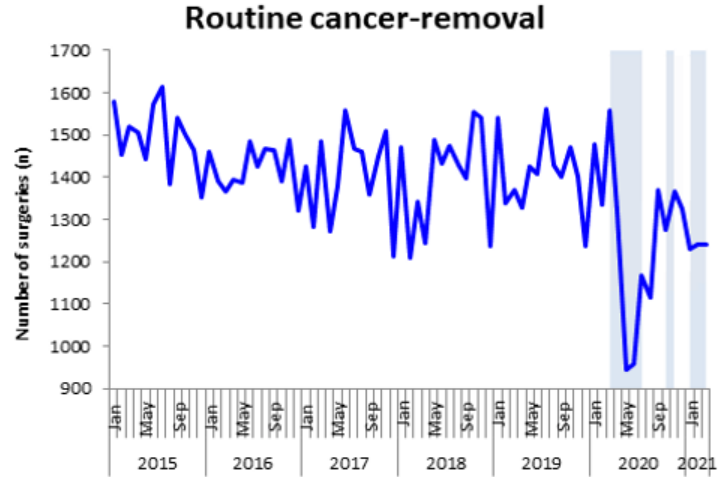
Proportion of patients receiving intervention: Hospital Episode Statistics



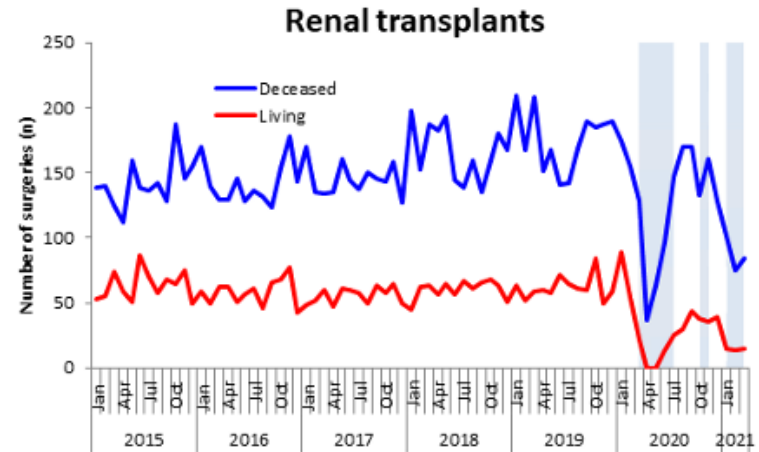
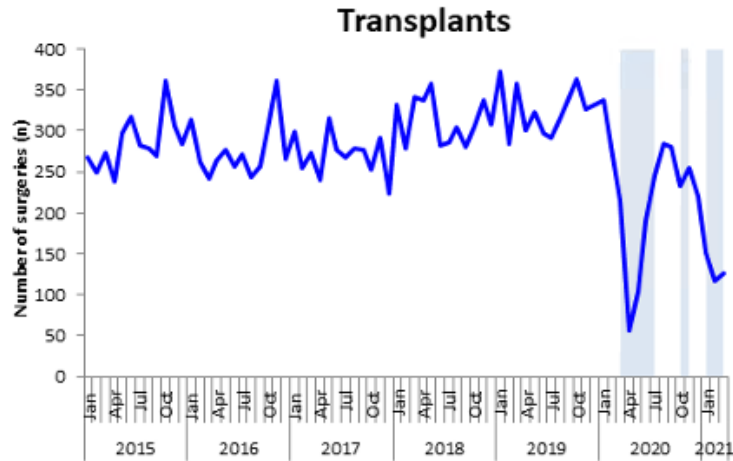
Barriers 1-3: Emergency Surgery



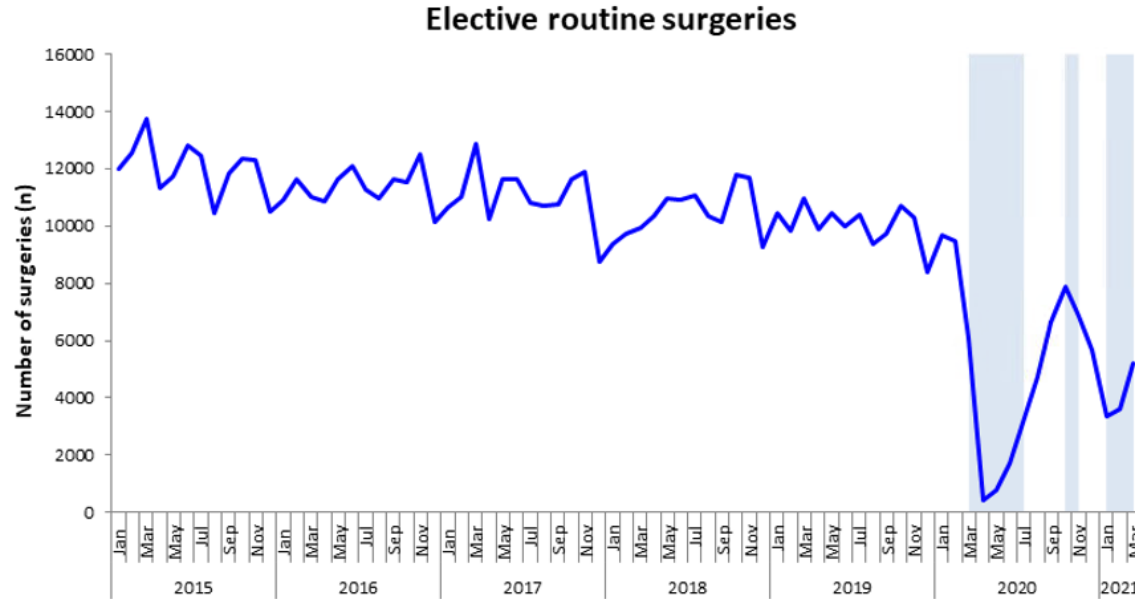
Cancer Surgery



Transplant Surgeries



Elective: Hip Replacement & Inguinal Hernia





Other Findings: COVID Effect

1. No change in proportion by social class & ethnic group.
2. No difference in emergency readmissions.
3. No increase post-op mortality, except appendectomy.



What About COVID in Low- and Middle-Income Countries?

Study of people living in seven informal settlements (slums) in four countries:

1. Reduced access (reduced staffing)
2. Cost of health care 
3. Household income 
4. Fear of positive diagnosis

BUT

1. Telehealth care
2. Pharmacists extend credit
3. (Inconsistent) government support

Website: www.arc-wm.nihr.ac.uk

Twitter: [@RJLilford](https://twitter.com/RJLilford) [@ARC_WM](https://twitter.com/ARC_WM)

Sign up to our ARC WM News Blog: <http://eepurl.com/OMOEP>

The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the NIHR, the Department of Health and Social Care, or the University of Birmingham.



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM