



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Embargoed**  
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### **Outpatient attendances growing with consultant to consultant referrals showing most growth**

Researchers at CHKS, the UK's leading independent provider of healthcare intelligence and quality improvement services, have found that outpatient attendances have risen over the last five years and that of all referral types consultant-to-consultant referrals have grown most from 16% to 21% of attendances (1.7 to 2.9 million attendances).

The total proportion of GP referrals to outpatient departments fell from 69% to 62% over the five years although the total number increased from 7.1 to 8.6 million referrals. The total number of attendances, including consultant-to-consultant referrals, referrals from A&E and other sources rose by a third (32%) in the last five years.

Dr Paul Robinson, head of market intelligence, CHKS, said: "Certain specialties, in particular oncology, naturally have a higher number of consultant-to-consultant referrals. However, there is a notable rise in consultant-to-consultant referrals in non-specialist trusts and there is a huge variation between trusts too."

The researchers also found that the proportion of patients referred to hospital-based nurses and allied health professionals for outpatient treatment increased significantly over the five-year period. Dr Robinson says: "While some patients will have been attending specialised clinics, it is possible that many could have been seen in a more local setting including GP practices."

Dr Robinson added: "The issue of consultant-to-consultant referrals has always been a concern for commissioners because they incur costs without GPs being involved. With the NHS under pressure to deliver a service that is efficient and gives tax payers value for money, these research results offer some significant findings."

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**Notes to editors:**

CHKS Ltd is the leading independent provider of healthcare intelligence and quality improvement services to the NHS and independent healthcare sector. With over 20 years' experience and working internationally with 480 clients, CHKS has a portfolio of information products, internationally-recognised accreditation programmes and consultancy services which provide clinicians and managers with the information needed to drive improvements in patient care, financial efficiency, clinical effectiveness and quality. The CHKS Advisory Board was set up in 2007 to provide direction and advice on strategic healthcare issues in the UK and overseas.

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