

CFAHR Evidence Brief

Factors influencing access to paediatric feeding services

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Alignment with [Metro South Health Research Strategy 2019 - 2024](#)

- Build research capability
- Increase research capacity
- Embed research in clinical services
- Translate research to better health
- Research excellence

Alignment with [Allied Health Research Capability & Development Strategy 2017 - 2020](#)

- Engage staff as research consumers
- Enable staff as research generators
- Build research-enabling infrastructure and strategic processes
- Strengthen leadership in research and innovation
- Enhance internal research collaboration and synergy
- Strengthen partnerships with consumers and external stakeholders

Alignment with [Allied Health Research Capability & Development Strategy 2017 - 2020](#)

- Standard 1 – Clinical Governance
- Standard 2 – Partnering with consumers
- Standard 3 – Preventing and controlling healthcare-associated infection
- Standard 4 – Medication safety
- Standard 5 – Comprehensive care
- Standard 6 – Communicating for safety
- Standard 7 – Blood management
- Standard 8 – Recognising and responding to acute deterioration

Practice Issue

Feeding disorders can have a significant impact on both the health and the psychosocial functioning of child and their family. Access to timely and appropriate specialist care is central to improving outcomes. However, within the general paediatric literature, it is recognised that accessing paediatric services can be difficult for many families due to a range of factors including distance and travel. It is also recognised that attending services can have impacts on other activities for the family (e.g. school attendance, parents work). As the management of children with feeding difficulties is a specialised area of speech pathology practice, access to these specific services can also be further influenced by local service availability, clinician experience and confidence. Understanding what families perceive as key issues for them when accessing paediatric feeding care has not been previously investigated. A comprehensive understanding of these factors is critical to improving service access for families and ensuring family-centred care.

Evidence

Parents of children accessing feeding services at the Queensland Children's Hospital participated in a semi-structured interview and completed questionnaires to collect information about service satisfaction and factors associated with accessing care. Overall, it was identified that although parents were highly satisfied with their child's care, access was associated with significant burden. The majority of parents reported that attending a 1-hour feeding appointment took at least half a day (up to 3 days) away from their usual activities. The total cost of attending the appointment ranged from \$52-508 AUD (mean \$150 for metropolitan families and \$415 for non-metropolitan families). Although all parents were 'willing to do whatever it takes' to access the care their child required, three main barriers were identified including distance and travel, impact on daily activities and inaccurate representation of feeding skills within the clinical environment.

Practice Change

The insights gathered from this study are pertinent to service managers and clinicians and support the need for service change and consideration of alternative service delivery models (e.g. telepractice home visiting, weekend or after-hour services) to deliver family-centred care and improve equity of access.

Publication/s

Raatz, Ward, Marshall, Afoakwah & Byrnes (Under review). "It takes a whole day, even though it's a one-hour appointment!" Factors impacting access to pediatric feeding services. *Dysphagia*

Adapted from Tilley Pain (Townsville HHS)

Based on the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association's Health Policy Evidence Brief

Metro South Health Research Strategy 2019 – 2024 https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/2325000/research-strategy.pdf

Allied Health Research Capability & Development Strategy 2017 – 2020 <https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/allied-health-research-strategy.pdf>

National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/sites/default/files/migrated/Overview-of-the-NSQHS-Standards-second-edition.pdf>