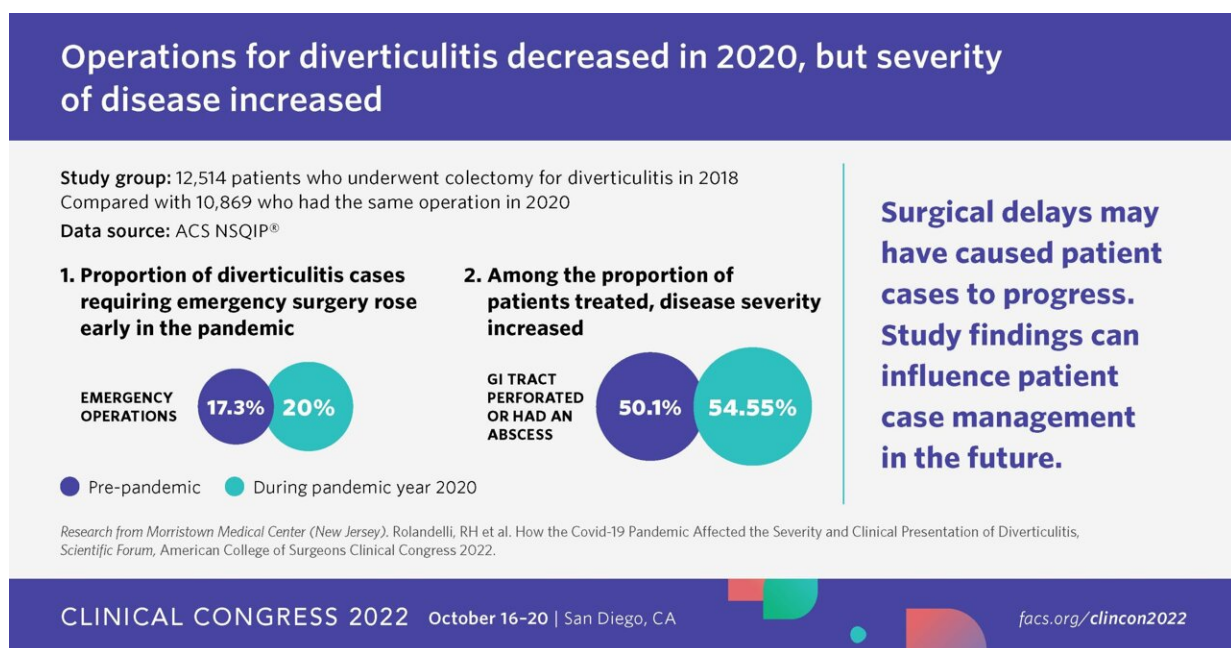


Operations for diverticulitis decreased in 2020, but the degree of disease severity increased

October 16 2022



Operations for diverticulitis decreased in 2020, but severity of disease increased.
Credit: American College of Surgeons

The first year of the COVID pandemic significantly altered how patients and providers treated diverticulitis, causing a significant drop in operations to manage the disease but a corresponding increase in the proportion of more severe cases and the need for emergency surgery,

according to results of a nationwide study presented at the Scientific Forum of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Clinical Congress 2022.

Rolando H. Rolandelli, MD, FACS, chair of surgery at Morristown Medical Center in Morristown, New Jersey, and professor of surgery at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, presented a study of 12,514 patients who had a colectomy for diverticulitis in 2018 and 10,869 who had the same procedure in 2020 using the ACS National Surgical Quality Improvement (ACS NSQIP®) database. That decline in 2020 represents a 13.14% decrease in operations for diverticulitis, which is an outpouching of the digestive tract causing painful inflammation or infection. ACS NSQIP is the leading nationally validated, risk-adjusted, outcomes-based program to measure and improve the quality of surgical care in hospitals. It was created by surgeons to help hospitals gauge the quality of their surgical programs and improve surgical outcomes by collecting robust, accurate, and precise clinical patient information.

"In the first year of the pandemic, 2020, we saw that patients were accessing the healthcare system less frequently for diverticulitis, but those who did were sicker on presentation. As a result, their postoperative outcomes were not as good," Dr. Rolandelli said.

Key findings

- Patients were more likely to have [emergency surgery](#) for diverticulitis in 2020, with the proportion increasing to 20% of operations from 17.3% (p
- The proportion of patients with a known abscess or perforation of the gastrointestinal tract also increased, from 50.1 to 54.55% (p
- The proportion of Black patients increased in 2020, from 7 to 7.7% (p=0.032), which was offset by a decline in the proportion

of white patients, from 82.4 to 77.7% (p

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