

Did The COVID Pandemic Impact Admissions to The Mater Misericordiae University Hospital Gastroenterology Service?



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Introduction

- Patients presenting to MMUH with gastroenterology-specific complaints are admitted under the luminal or hepatology teams as appropriate.
- The literature suggests the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the volume and nature of unplanned admissions to hospital.¹
- Regular audit aids in optimizing patient care and workforce planning.

Aim

To characterise gastroenterology admissions to MMUH in the pre and post-COVID eras.

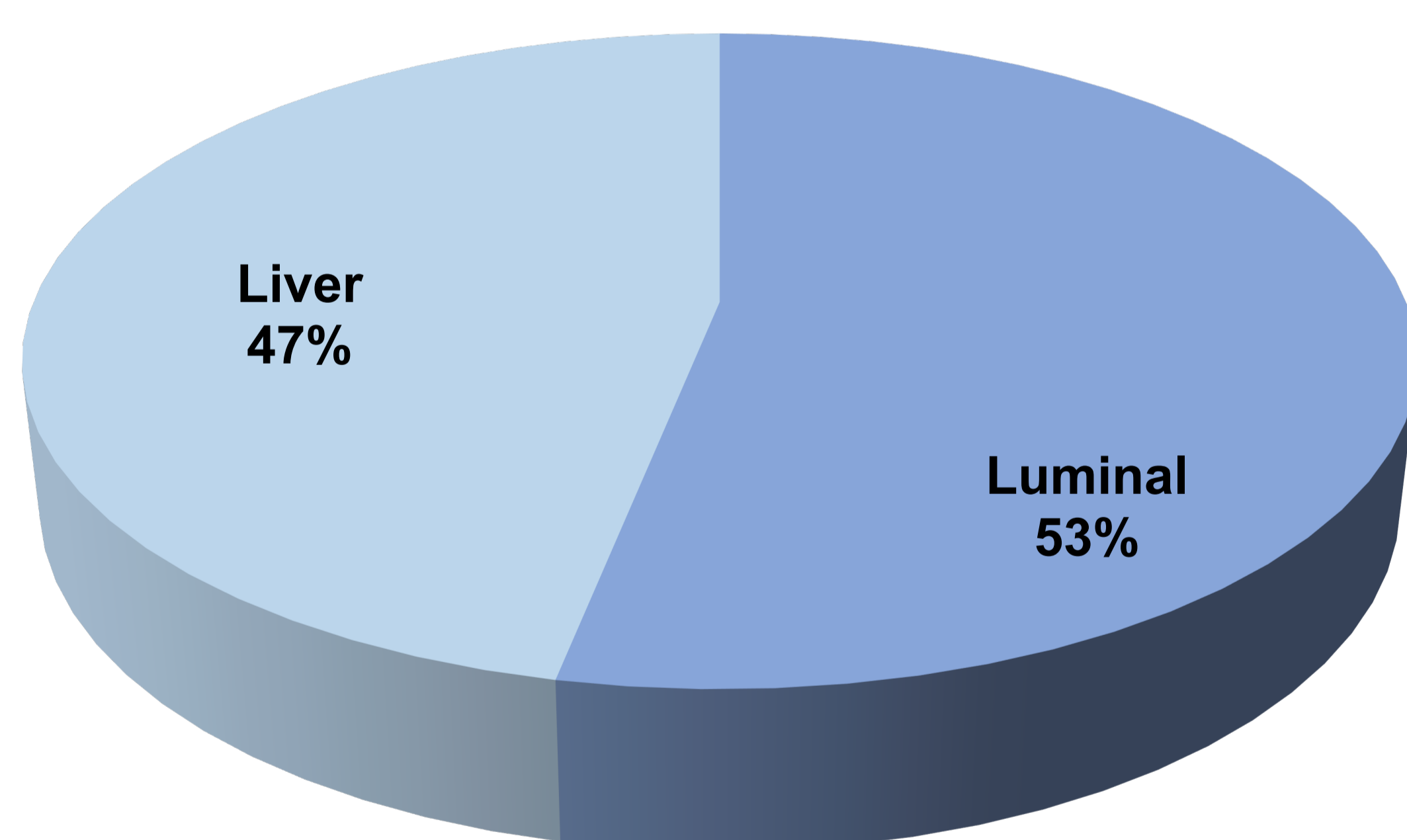
Methods

1. Gastroenterology admissions were identified using an encrypted messaging application (14/09/2019-14/11/2019 and 14/09/2020-14/11/2020).
2. Patient information was extracted from electronic patient records.

Results: Demographics

- 216 admissions total. 111 pre-COVID. 105 post-COVID.
- **Sex:** 115 males & 101 females.
- **Age:** mean 60 years (16-97 years).

Pre-COVID Gastroenterology Admissions



Post-COVID Gastroenterology Admissions

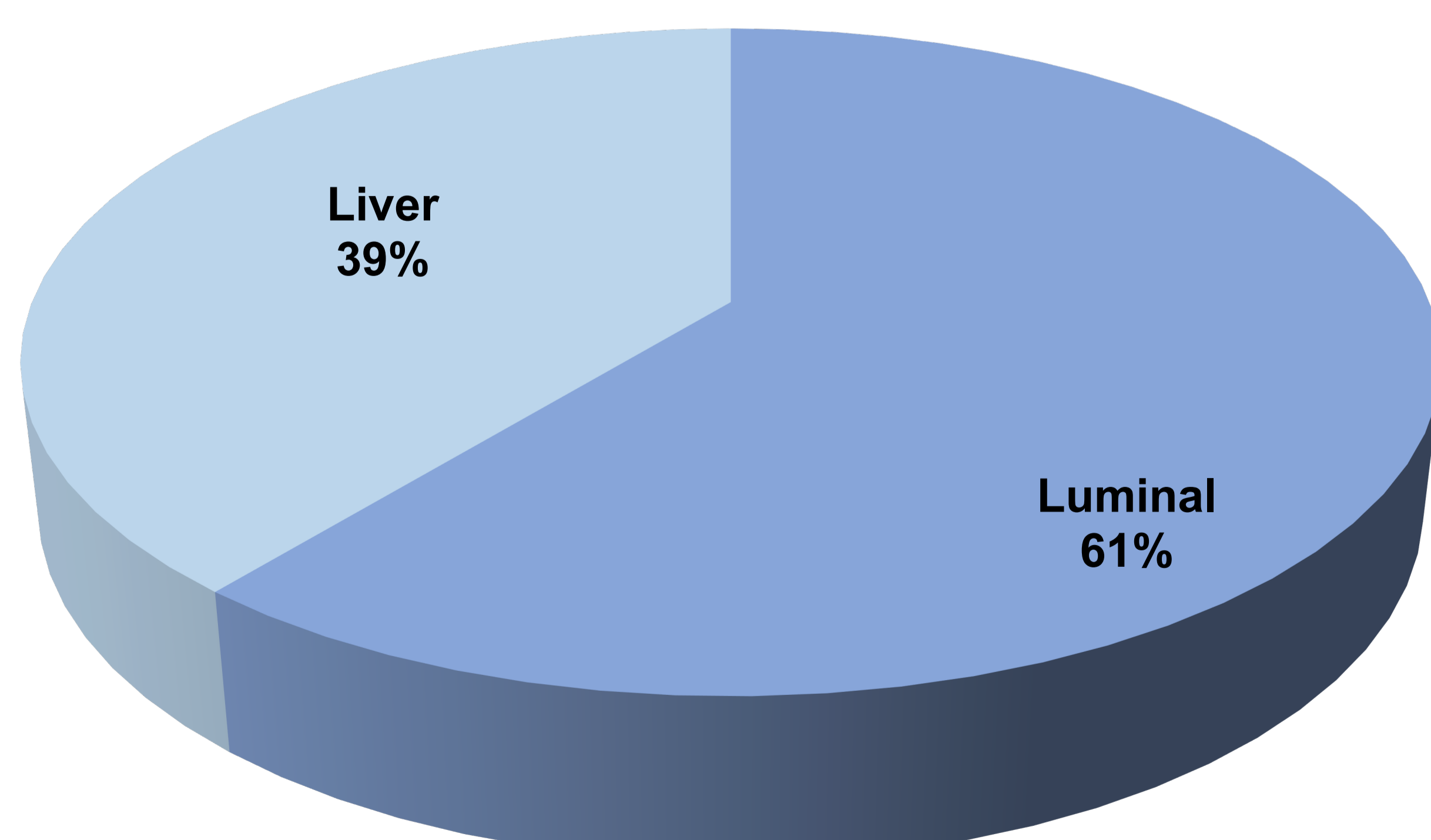
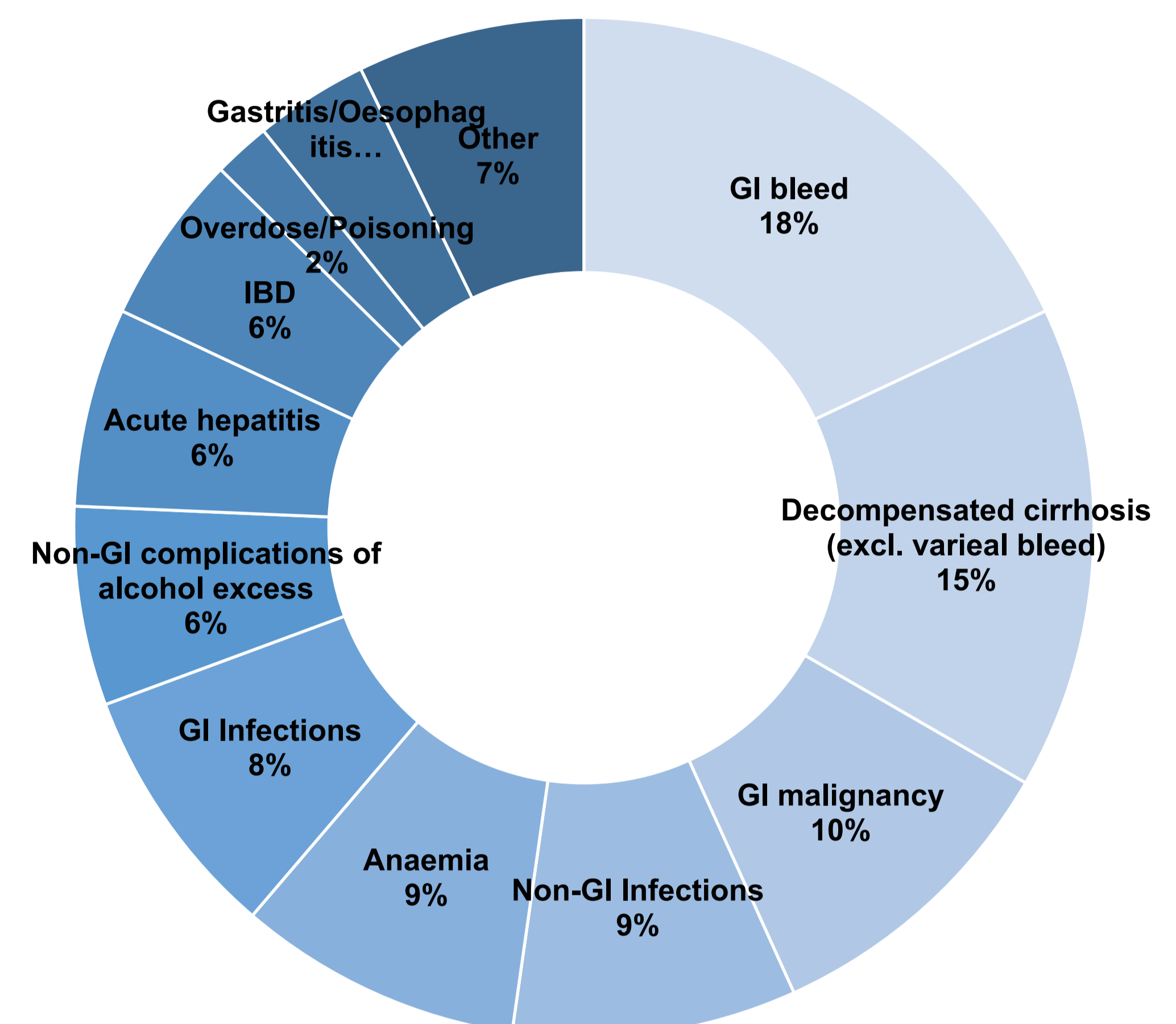


Figure 1. Distribution of Pre- & Post-COVID Gastroenterology Admissions to the Liver & Luminal Teams

Results: Referrals

Pre-COVID Referrals to Gastroenterology



Post-COVID Referrals to Gastroenterology

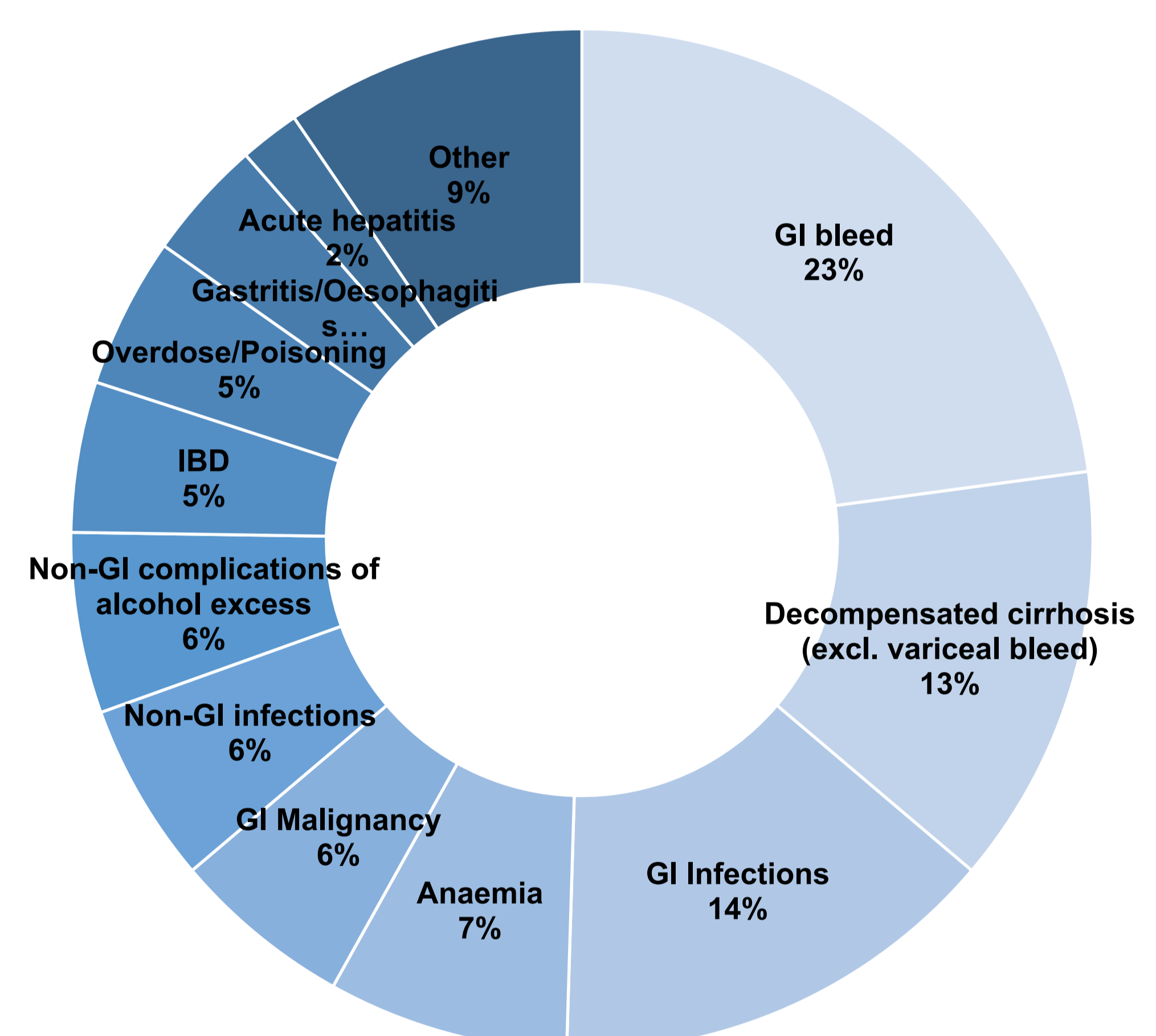


Figure 2. Types of Referrals to Gastroenterology in the Pre- & Post-COVID Eras

Results: Markers of Severity

- Comparing the pre- and post-COVID eras, there was no significant difference in:
 1. **Length of stay** (9.47±8.93 days v 7.26±10.49 days; p=0.0961).
 2. **Rate of admission to critical care** (5% v 2%; p=0.2814).
 3. **Mortality** (5% v 3%; p=0.5000).

Conclusion

- Over the time periods examined, the COVID pandemic did not significantly impact the number, nature or severity of gastroenterology admissions in MMUH.
- The pandemic has resulted in staff shortages and redeployment so an unchanged workload is significant.
- Alcohol-related illness remains a common reason for admission and demands dedicated care.

References

1. Roy C, Bollman E, Carson L, Northrop A, Jackson E, Moresky R. Assessing the indirect effects of COVID-19 on healthcare delivery, utilization and health outcomes: a scoping review. European Journal of Public Health. 2021.