

### Advice Note: Heart murmurs in children

Dear GP,

Thank you for your referral.

Based on the information provided, we do not think that this patient requires a secondary care input. Over 80% of healthy children have a heart murmur detected at some stage during their childhood and in vast majority, the murmur is benign (not related to a structural heart disease). Features associated with innocent murmurs include:

- Grade 2 or less
- Softer intensity when the patient is sitting or standing compared with when the patient is supine
- Short ejection systolic duration
- Minimal radiation (the murmur is limited to the lower parasternal border)
- Musical or vibratory quality

#### The criteria for referral are:

- To acute services by paging the paediatric RMO via hospital switchboard :
  - Patients under 4 weeks of age
  - Central cyanosis
  - Abnormally strong or weak pulses (especially femoral pulses)
  - Symptoms of cardiac dysfunction (eg breathlessness, sweating with feeding, dizziness, syncope, palpitations, chest pain)
- For an outpatient assessment – if any concerning features on:
  - History:
    - Family history of cardiomyopathy, cardiac deaths, CONGENITAL heart disease in first degree relative, SUDI
    - Personal history of cardiac symptoms, including faltering growth, frequent respiratory infections, decreased exercise tolerance, unexplained chronic cough or wheeze
    - History of Kawasaki disease or rheumatic fever
  - Examination :
    - Persistent murmur noted in the first year of life – ie, persists when the child is afebrile and well
    - A murmur persisting beyond 5 years of age
    - Murmur not previously investigated in children with dysmorphic features
    - Characteristics of the murmur:
      - Loud (grade 3/6 or louder) systolic murmur
      - Pansystolic murmur
      - Harsh murmurs
      - Radiation of murmur to back or axilla
      - Any diastolic murmur
      - Abnormal heart sounds, systolic clicks
      - Intensity increased with standing
  - **Abnormal FOR AGE ECG** (if requested)
    - Paediatric patients can be referred by GP to the Hutt Cardiology service for Paediatric ECG and reporting (free of charge for the patient)

If on your review this patient meets the above criteria, please do not hesitate to re-refer to our service.

Kind regards,

*Hutt Paediatric Team*