



The monthly hospital update for general practitioners

GP Bulletin

DCH launches 24/7 thrombolysis service

150,000 people in the UK have strokes every year. Of these, 67,000 people die and many thousands are left disabled.

Across the county of Dorset, about 1,500 people will have a stroke each year and of these about one third will die and one third will have some disability, while the remaining third are left severely disabled. More than 10,000 people in Dorset are living with the long-term consequences of stroke.

Clot-busting drugs must be given within three hours of stroke symptoms starting to give people the best chance of recovery, and they can only be given to people who have had certain types of stroke.

Every year approximately 350 people in West Dorset will be admitted to Dorset County Hospital (DCH) having had a stroke and for the last four years the Stroke Team has provided a Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm thrombolysis service. The team has now launched a round the clock 24 hour thrombolysis service so that people in West Dorset will now be able to get this treatment closer to home no matter what time of day or night they have their stroke.

The Dorset Cardiac and Stroke Network (a partnership of local NHS trusts, stroke patients and support groups) have led the developments of the thrombolysis service across all hospitals in Dorset and have provided training for doctors and nurses, and supported the Diagnostics Team at DCH in training all of the on-call radiographers in carrying out CT scans for stroke patients. These scans can now be seen on a laptop by the stroke consultant to assist in accurate diagnosis of the type of stroke. The installation of a telemedicine system in the DCH Emergency Department means that a stroke consultant can now be contacted any time via a laptop link which allows them to see and talk to the patient and emergency team without actually being present in the department.

The launch of the new 24 hour thrombolysis service will dramatically improve the chances of recovery from a stroke for those who are eligible to receive it. These clot-busting drugs need to be given as soon as possible after a stroke, ideally in the first hour, so it is vital that people recognise and respond to the signs of a stroke quickly by dialling 999.

DCH Consultant Stroke Physicians Dr Rob Williams and Dr Harald Pröschel emphasised the importance of speedy treatment.

Dr Williams said: "Every minute that passes after symptoms start, two million brain cells die. This clot-busting treatment can help to reverse the damage caused by stroke."

Dr Pröschel added: "The earlier it is given, the more effective the treatment is, so I urge people to learn the FAST check."

- **Face** - Can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye dropped?
- **Arm weakness** - Can they raise both arms?
- **Speech problems** - Can you understand what they are trying to say?
- **Time** - call 999 if you spot any of these symptoms

The role of the local ambulance service is also vital in getting patients to hospital as fast as possible. South Western Ambulance Service has been at the forefront of developing better stroke care, leading work on a national level. Deputy Clinical Director Adrian South commented: “The ambulance service has been working for the past six years with the hospital to enable an ever increasing number of patients to receive clot busting treatment following a stroke.

“This fantastic development at Dorset County Hospital means that Dorset is now the first county in the South West where thrombolysis is available 24/7. I would encourage everyone to learn the FAST test and remember that stroke is a medical emergency; if you suspect someone may be experiencing one, call 999 for an ambulance immediately.”

Improving care for patients with colorectal cancer

At Dorset County Hospital we are always trying to improve the quality of care we provide for our patients. This has been shown by the colorectal team who have been working on improving their care pathway over the last two years. Back in 2008 the team decided to review and formalise their ‘enhanced recovery programme’ for patients undergoing surgery for colorectal cancer. This programme develops a care pathway using the most up-to-date evidence to reduce patient’s pain, fatigue, postoperative complications, and their length of stay in hospital, so allowing patients an earlier return to normal function.

Julie Lane, Colorectal Cancer Nurse Specialist, was tasked with driving the changes necessary at Dorset County Hospital. She worked with multidisciplinary representatives from all the departments that provide care to patients undergoing bowel surgery, forming an ‘Enhanced Recovery Working Party’ to ensure that changes were made to improve care before, during and after surgery.

Pamela Ellis, Chair of the Clinical Audit Committee, said: “With the enhanced recovery programme now fully in place, the team have had a chance to measure the success of their efforts. Julie, with the help of the Clinical Audit Department, surveyed 42 patients over a six month period. The results were extremely good across all aspects of patient care. The direct support of the Cancer Nurse Specialists led to 93% of patients feeling that they had good explanations of their investigations, treatment and diagnosis as well as having sufficient time to discuss their diagnosis and treatment options. The majority of patients were discharged from hospital when expected, or earlier than expected. Overall 100% of patients were satisfied with the care they received whilst being treated for colorectal cancer and 82% were very satisfied.

“The survey has highlighted a few areas where the team plan to make further improvements, for example reducing anxiety prior to surgery and improving pain control after surgery.

“This is an excellent example of how a care pathway can be implemented and the patient survey has confirmed that this has improved patient care.”

DCH online phone directory

We have recently upgraded our online phone directory so it is easier to find direct numbers for individual staff and departments. You should be able to access the phone directory from your surgeries via this link <http://commsware.wdgh-tr.swest.nhs.uk/btspwscripts/> but if you have any problems please contact our ICT service desk on 01305 255555.

Raising awareness of organ donation



Transplant donor Renuka Coghlan spoke of her experiences to mark National Transplant Week.

The DCH transplant team joined Renuka in the hospital restaurant to encourage people to sign up as donors and raise awareness of live donation.

More than 10,000 people in the UK currently need a transplant. Of these, 1,000 die each year as there are not enough organs available. To find out more, and to register on the UK Organ Donor Register, you can visit www.uktransplant.org.uk

Pictured manning the information stand, from left to right, are Transplant Nurse Specialist Chris Lawrence, donor Renuka Coghlan, Specialist Practitioner for Organ Donation Chris Chalker, ICU Consultant and Clinical Lead for Organ Donation Dr Andy Ball and Transplant Nurse Specialist Ruth Dale.

Supporting the SmokeStop campaign



Staff on DCH's Ear, Nose and Throat Department have been thanked for their work to increase patient referrals to the Dorset SmokeStop service. SmokeStop presented the staff involved with a hamper to thank them for all their hard work to support the campaign to help people quit.

Claire Peak and Laura Everett, Health Programme Advisors for Smokestop, are currently engaged in a Department of Health initiative within DCH to systemise the support given to patients who smoke when they attend

the hospital and to provide ongoing support for them afterwards in the community. Initially they are working with a small number of departments but the project is soon to be rolled out hospital wide. For more information about SmokeStop initiatives you can contact Claire or Laura on 01305 361181 or email, Claire.Peak@dorset-pct.nhs.uk or Laura.Everett@dorset-pct.nhs.uk

GP Education

Please click on the following link for more information about forthcoming **Grand Round** events. On September 8 there are presentations on a respiratory case, resuscitation and the Dorset County Hospital Skills Lab. Full details can be found here <http://www.dchft.nhs.uk/gp/education.html>

Bookings are now being taken for the **2010 GP Refresher Week**. The event runs from November 8 to 12. Please click on the following link for full details: <http://www.dchft.nhs.uk/gp/education/refresherweek2010/GP%20Refresher%20week%202010%20programme%20and%20application%20form.pdf>

For more information about Dorset County Hospital you can visit the GP section of our website here <http://www.dchft.nhs.uk/gp/gpindex.html>

If there is anything else you would like to see on our website, or in this newsletter, please contact Communications Manager Susie Palmer on susie.palmer@dchft.nhs.uk or 01305 254683
