



The monthly hospital update for general practitioners

GP Bulletin

Blood transfusion revolution

Patients needing major hip surgery and vascular surgery at DCH can now benefit from reduced need for blood top up transfusions.

New equipment, an autologous cell salvage machine, allows blood lost during operation to be washed, filtered and given back to patients whilst they are still asleep!

The new cell salvage machine has now been used for over a hundred hip revision operations and have greatly reduced the need to give blood.

Hip surgeon, Mr Peter Ward, now insists all re-do hips have the Fresenius machine available. On average the equivalent of nearly two pints of blood are given back to each patient whilst they are still asleep.

Furthermore, with new post operative drain systems recently introduced at Dorset County, any blood loss after major hip surgery is filtered and given back within 12 hours of surgery. The need to use donated blood for these patients has been halved. Risks of infection are reduced and a more rapid recovery seen.

The need for blood donors certainly remains but using this cell saver machine and new drains allows precious donated blood to be saved for those needing emergency transfusions.

Patients having revision surgery at DCH now have amongst the shortest patient stays in the country.

Further information about hip surgery is available on dedicated pages on our website at <http://www.dchft.nhs.uk/hip/index.html>

Arrhythmia awareness

The sixth annual Arrhythmia Awareness Week will be launched on 8 June 2009. The focus of this year's campaign is 'Know Your Pulse'.

A simple pulse check can be an easy but effective way of identifying potential cardiac arrhythmias. The idea of 'knowing your pulse' is relevant to patients, supporters and medical professionals.

Kay Elliott, British Heart Foundation Arrhythmia Nurse Specialist, with professional colleagues and volunteers from the West Dorset ICD (Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator) Support Group will be getting behind this campaign.

On Tuesday 9 July 2009 there will be a stand with lots of information and advice for those shopping at Weymouth's Morrisons supermarket. On Wednesday Kay will be joining the opening of the new Atrium Health Centre in Dorchester with a similar stand and display.

Kay said: "The West Dorset ICD Support group is well established now and aims to provide patients and their 'significant others' with an opportunity to meet others in the same situation.

"Learning to live with a device, which may at some point need to deliver a life-saving shock, can take some adjustment. Meeting others in a relaxed environment can really help

with this process. We are getting 20-30 people attend each meeting, which are held every three months.”

The meetings are held at the Dorford Centre in Dorchester from 10.30am to 12.30pm. The next meetings are on 9 July, 15 October, 14 January 2010 and 15 April 2010.

For more details please contact Kay Elliott, BHF Arrhythmia Nurse Specialist on 01305 254920 or kay.elliott@dchft.nhs.uk

The joy of text

Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is revolutionising the way patients receive sexual health results, advice and support.

The Genitourinary Department now offers text messaging to remind patients about appointments, send test results and contact those needing possible treatment.

A hi-tech IT system allows patients visiting Dorset County Hospital’s sexual health department to automatically receive appointment reminders and test results via text messages sent direct to their mobile phones.

Since its launch last year, the scheme has improved attendance and supported patient care, especially among younger patients who often forget appointments or are worried that test results might be sent to their home addresses.

Consultant Nurse Miranda King said: “Text messaging is a great way to communicate with our patients. The reminder message, sent to all patients the day before their appointment, has cut by 50% the number of missed appointments, and allowed us to focus on those patients most in need of medical support.

“Patient care has been improved by the text result service. Patients are sent a text message with their results rather than telephoning the clinic. This saves nurses’ time, and patients prefer it as they are not restricted to telephoning for their results at a particular time. If a patient has a positive result, this is not sent by text, but the message will ask them to call the clinic at a time convenient to them. A nurse will then discuss the result with them and arrange for them to attend for treatment.

“If a patient is diagnosed with an infection that can be passed on through sex, it is often advisable for their current, and sometimes their previous, sexual partners to be tested. Contacting ex-partners can be difficult; they may not answer their phone or respond to a letter, nationally only 40-60% of named sexual partners attend GUM clinics for testing.

“At the clinic, since texting has been used to contact previous partners of patients discreetly and confidentially, 70% of named partners have attended the clinic for testing and treatment. “

Miranda added: “Text messaging has improved the clinic’s capacity, and improved our ability to identify and treat people who may have a sexually transmitted infection. This will help to reduce the spread of sexually transmitted infections in Dorset.”

For more information about services offered by the GUM department you can visit our website at <http://www.dchft.nhs.uk/patients/wards-depts/gum/gum.html>

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
