

GP FOCUS

Focus on: Bowel Cancer Screening

January 2013

Milton Keynes Hospital has been the lead screening centre for the Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire Bowel Cancer screening programme for four years. During this time we have screened over 100,000 patients and performed 1,400 colonoscopies. The programme has diagnosed 107 cancers and 109 high grade polyps with cancer risk were removed, showing just how valuable the screening programme is. We know that some patients may be reluctant to present themselves for screening, but these figures demonstrate the value of overcoming that reluctance – please encourage your patients within the screening target group to complete their tests.

To increase the benefit of screening to a greater proportion of the population, we are planning to extend the age range (currently 60 to 69 years) to 60 to 75 years. This is an important next step in our contribution to reducing bowel cancer in Milton Keynes.

However, in addition to extending the age range, we already been working with GP practices in areas of Milton Keynes where uptake is relatively low, so that we can help to reduce health inequalities in our city.

Endoscopy facilities and staff

MKHFT uses its funding to invest in services that the local population needs, and has recently opened a fourth endoscopy room with state-of-the-art equipment. This means we can respond quickly to referrals for endoscopy, and ensures that patients have the right facilities for their tests. Our annual patient experience surveys have consistently shown very good feedback; it's important to us that patients like the services we provide and if there are aspects of what we do that aren't right, we need to identify these and try to make changes.

To further develop the service, we are planning to recruit nurse endoscopists. This is so that lower risk patients can be offered endoscopy promptly, reducing pressure on gastroenterologists so they are available for patients with comorbidities, or who are likely to need a therapeutic endoscopy. The whole team works seamlessly between medical gastroenterology and colorectal services, which means that there are opportunities for continuous professional development, and that patients are managed by one team rather than being transferred to a different team, if required.

Direct to test pilot

In conjunction with commissioning colleagues, we have been running a pilot of a direct to test service for gastroscopy and flexible sigmoidoscopy. This allows GPs to refer only for the endoscopy they require, with no initial or follow up appointment. Not only does this save the CCG money, it will empower the GPs to manage their patients in primary care and refer to clinics only the patients who need specialist input.

We plan to present the details of the pilot to GPs early in 2013.



The new kit features a ScopeGuide, bottom left

Brief Focus

Research

MKHFT contributes to improving the understanding of disease and contributes to developing new treatments, including gastrointestinal disease. Dr Ravi Madhotra, Lead Clinician for Endoscopy and Gastroenterology, has recruited over 40 patients into a study looking at Barrett's oesophagus surveillance strategy, and the National Oesophago-gastric cancer study. The department is also participating in national IBD trials. These trials will help further develop services and treatment for patients nationally and internationally.

HSDU Retains their Accreditation

The hospital's Sterilising and Disinfecting Unit (HSDU) recently retained their ISO 13485 accreditation and the ISO 9001 and was found to be fully compliant in a recent audit. The Endoscopy Decontamination Unit was included in the audit for the first time. This provides assurance to our patients and referrers that Milton Keynes Hospital adheres to the highest hygiene standards.