



FOCUS

The latest news and developments from your local hospital

Spring 2013



Welcome to the Spring issue of GP Focus

Since I joined the Trust in February, I have had the pleasure of observing many improvements throughout the hospital. Trust staff are committed to providing quality, safe, efficient care to our patients. Their efforts are coming to fruition, which you can read more about in this newsletter.

The cooperation of GPs with projects such as the direct to test endoscopy pilot and our new Ambulatory Emergency Care Unit, is gratefully received and helping us achieve our aims.

Ensuring our patients receive care in the right place and by the right clinician is having a real impact. It means the care patients receive is timely: at the end of April, 96.3% of our A&E patients were seen within four hours, which is the first time this target has been met in 18 months. It is hard to believe the difference in A&E compared to just a few months ago. This development is thanks to improved pathways and discharge processes elsewhere in the hospital: if patients are admitted to the hospital, they are staying for less time than they might have a year ago.

Most importantly, we are continually seeking our patients' views about the care they receive: we want to know what we are doing well and where we could improve. As the result of the feedback patients gave us during the We Care programme, we are launching new values to help us consistently provide the best quality care to our patients. The improvements we have made to our maternity environment demonstrate our commitment to acting on patient feedback.

I am very grateful for the support of our local GP colleagues and look forward to further collaboration. If you would like to discuss anything about the hospital, please do not hesitate to get in touch - email me at Joe.Harrison@mkhospital.nhs.uk. You can also follow me on Twitter - @JoeHMK and keep up-to-date with regular developments.

Joe Harrison
Chief Executive



Page 2:
Ambulatory
Emergency
Care Unit



Page 3: Patient
'on top of the
world' with
new heart
device



Page 4:
Supervisors of
Midwives

Ambulatory Emergency Care Unit



As part of our expanding emergency services for our patients, the Ambulatory Emergency Care Unit (AECU) was opened in April. This is a further improvement in our clinical pathways for our patients and has been created to provide a patient centred model of care for patients requiring emergency/urgent assessments safely and efficiently in one day.

The AECU is located in the Maple Unit, next door to our current Emergency Department (ED). It will be open, initially, Monday to Friday 09:00-16:30 hours but there are plans to increase these working hours into evenings and weekends.

The AECU accepts referrals directly from GPs and provides alternative options for GPs to use for patients

requiring urgent/emergency assessment and care, who would currently be seen or admitted via the Medical Admissions Unit (MAU). The patient pathway in AECU provides patients with minor interventions, e.g. intravenous antibiotics, small amounts of intravenous fluid etc, so that they can be cared for as an outpatient and discharged with appropriate information to them and to the GP. Patients requiring closer observations will be monitored by the AECU on a daily clinic basis or by telephone follow up. Patients who are found to require more intervention will, in the usual way, be admitted and further assessed as appropriate.

This new service does not replace any conventional specialty outpatient or fast track clinic but is in addition to it.

Positive feedback about the AECU has already been received from a patient:

"A few days [ago] my leg swelled up and as my GP was concerned it was a blood clot or DVT arranged for me to go immediately to AECU. I cannot praise the staff enough. I was dealt with efficiently, with care and good humour. The nurses on duty were superb and although there was some waiting time for tests and ultrasound checks, the professionalism shone through."

Direct to test endoscopy pilot

Good collaboration between GPs and consultants has been seen with a recent pilot of a 'direct to test' endoscopy service, helpfully commissioned by our local Clinical Commissioning Group.

The basis of the pilot involves giving GPs access to endoscopy procedures in our hospital. Endoscopy can be used to help diagnose or rule out a variety of serious diagnoses, such as cancer. The benefit for patients who have clear results from their endoscopy is that they do not need a first or a follow-up gastroenterology appointment, so they have to come to hospital only once, rather than for three separate appointments. The pilot proved the service to be effective and safe.

Macmillan Quality Environment Mark

The hospital's Macmillan Unit has retained its Quality Environmental Mark.

The assessors look for how the unit uses its physical environment to enhance patients' experience and scored the unit highly in all areas they were marking against.

They highlighted for particular praise the designated service for teenagers and young adults who can now access treatment locally; the lymphoedema support group and the wig



service provided by a local salon for support both pre- and post hair loss.

In addition to the awards the unit's staff have received for their assessment and treatment of people affected by cancer, the service has received positive feedback from their patients.

Patient 'on top of the world' with new heart device

Patient Tim Percival is feeling 'on top of the world' after being the recipient of Milton Keynes Hospital's first-ever advanced heart device earlier this year.

Tim, 74, was suffering from heart failure and was chosen as the first Milton Keynes patient to receive a bi-ventricular defibrillator. In the past, patients have needed to travel to Oxford for this surgery.

Tim said: "I couldn't walk from the wheelchair to the bed. I'd be gasping for air. I couldn't lay down and had to sit in a chair to sleep. It was touch and go. At one point I'd been given a five to 20 per cent chance to live.

"I feel good now - in fact I feel on top of the world at the moment. It's a wonderful feeling."

The hospital decided to start the procedures almost a year ago, and since then staff have been busy preparing, learning to use the new equipment and training for the change. The device was installed



by cardiology consultant Raj Khiani, who has previously fitted them for Oxford's John Radcliffe Hospital. With the service now up-and-running, Milton Keynes Hospital expects to be giving 60 local patients bi-ventricular defibrillators each year.

Dr Khiani said: "These devices can prolong life, and also improve quality of life. We are really pleased that we'll now be able to help patients locally.

"It has been a real step up in the

skills of our nursing staff - they've had more advanced training, a stronger skill mix and more experience. The team did exceptionally well. It's good for patients, it's good for the team and it's good for the hospital."

Tim was full of praise for Dr Khiani - who he called "the king pin" - and the "fantastic" staff.

He said: "They deserve a medal for all they do. I can't press home enough how fantastic they've been. This is the best hospital I've been to.

"I wasn't worried about being the first - they'd taken me through what was going to happen at least three times. They were very thorough.

"It's been fantastic. It's been a bit like being on holiday. Even the food is pukka! Not once have I had anything to complain about. Absolutely amazing."

Tim was looking forward to his recovery. He explained: "I've not been able to play with the kids for the last two years - I've a three and a two-year-old. I'm hoping to be able to do that. Family comes first."



Oliver Pearce's professorship

Oliver Pearce, Orthopaedic Consultant, has been awarded a visiting professorship in sports science at the University of Bedford. Oliver's professorship will involve a variety of exciting research projects including helping professional athletes develop the most efficient training and recovery processes.

It's not all about future Olympians - one project Oliver is already working on could have very real benefits for our patients. For example, he and his research team will be looking at how to make sure patients are biochemically ready to have a knee operation, which will then help speed up their recovery. They will be using patients at Milton Keynes as part of their research.

Oliver said: "I am delighted to have been awarded the visiting professorship. I'm looking forward to working with the team at the University of Bedford to research and apply scientific principles with the aim of improving care and outcomes for our patients."



Enhancements to the maternity environment

The hospital's maternity department has been making improvements to its environment as the result of asking mums and their birthing partners about how their experience could be enhanced.

The focus of the improvements is to help give expectant mums as much choice as possible about the way they give birth and to help ensure that women are supported to give birth naturally, wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Evidence shows that water births significantly reduce labour pain and aid relaxation for women in labour. An additional birthing pool, to help make labouring mums' experience as comfortable as possible, has been installed. Previously, not all women were able to labour in water if their unborn baby needs special monitoring, but the provision of mobile foetal monitoring equipment that can be used in water will enable more mums to use the birthing pool wherever possible.

In addition, cribs that clamp to beds have been purchased: these will help less mobile mothers form the vital bond with their new baby. The support that birthing partners provide to labouring mums is also recognised with the provision of mobile reclining chairs.

Around 4,000 babies a year are delivered at Milton Keynes Hospital. The hospital is the only one in the country to guarantee one-to-one midwife support to women in established labour.



Supervisors of Midwives

Supervisors of Midwives (SoM) are experienced practising midwives who have undertaken additional training and education to support, guide and supervise midwives in the provision of safe, high quality care. Every midwife, whether employed by the NHS or working privately, must have a named SoM.

Local expectant and new mums are able to benefit from SoMs' advice and support, helping them to understand and make decisions and choices about their maternity care. For example, an SoM may offer advice on where a woman gives birth and their birth plan, if they feel they are unable to do this with their own midwife.

SoMs can also listen and help explain events to women whose labours deviated from their birth plan and are left with questions, to help them understand what happened during the labour process, as well as how and why decisions were made.

Supervisors of Midwives can be contacted through the hospital's main switchboard - 01908 660033.

Screening for Down's Syndrome

A quality assurance report has revealed that Milton Keynes Hospital's sonographers are providing a green flag standard service for Down's syndrome screening.

The report, provided by the Down's Syndrome Screening Assurance Support Service (DQASS), showed all 11 of our sonographers passed with flying colours.

Since 2009, sonographers have the measurements they take during a scan plotted on charts to see how close they are to the national statistics issued by the Foetal Medicine Foundation.

The flag rating for sonographers

- green (excellent), amber (may require further supervision) red (not acceptable) and is an indication of the quality of the screening programme in Milton Keynes. Women aged 45 and over have a one-in-30 chance of giving birth to a child with Down's syndrome. Therefore, with more women having children later in life, screening for the condition becomes more important.

Every six months, the graphs are sent to the local superintendent or screening support sonographer to be shared at the area's screening committee.

Veronica Gordon, superintendent radiographer, said "It's a testament to the sonography team's enthusiasm

and dedication - and it's great to see that all the hard work has paid off. "It's also a great achievement for the entire team - including our imaging assistants who take bloods and brief the patients before their scan and the admin team who make sure the appointments are booked at the right time."

The measurements that sonographers take from the ultrasound and blood test cannot diagnose the syndrome - but they can establish if the risk is high or low. Depending on the results of the test, our sonographers can refer expectant mothers for further tests with the prenatal screening midwives or point them in the right direction for help and information.



Feedback from patients about the sessions was positive:

"Friendly, honest and open atmosphere."

"Good opportunity to provide feedback on experiences."

"To feel like my feelings, views and opinions will be heard is great."

"We all felt that our opinion counted."

In October, it was the turn of staff during In Our Shoes sessions - they talked about what made a good day and a bad day.

During November, Values into Action sessions were held. Staff looked at all the feedback that has been received so far and made promises to patients and their colleagues about what can be made better so Milton Keynes Hospital will be the hospital of choice to be treated in and to work in.

New Trust-wide values that emphasise the standards that are expected of staff are being launched. The values include timely care and attention; listening and explaining; working together and providing a clean and comfortable environment. Getting these things right will help us make further improvements in productivity and better outcomes for our patients.

We Care

At Milton Keynes Hospital we want every patient to receive the best-quality care, every day. The We Care programme, which was launched in autumn 2012, aims to improve patient experience. The way we treat our patients directly affects their safety and clinical outcomes.

Last September and October, patients attended In Your Shoes sessions. During these sessions, patients spoke to staff about their good and bad experiences and how we could make more of those good experiences. The great news is patients gave us a lot of praise for things like quality care by caring staff and cleanliness. Patients also told staff about values or actions that they would like to see introduced, such as improved communication.