

# Minster Health Newsletter

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**Late Summer 2004**

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## **Staff Update:**

We are sorry to see our last two GP registrars move on, as they were very helpful and popular with patients and staff alike. Both Dr Eaton and Dr Macleod are moving back into York District Hospital Accident and Emergency dept. where they will work for the next block of their training. However, as ever, time waits for no man, and we welcome two new registrars to the practice:

Dr. Nirupam Talukder is a graduate of Moscow University and is fluent in 5 languages! He is married with one toddler: he will be working with Dr. Ashley.

Dr Kamran Khan will be working with Dr Jones; he comes to us from the psychiatry department of Bootham Park Hospital, here in York. We know that you will make them feel welcome and soon have their 'noses to the grindstone'!

GP registrars are fully qualified doctors, who are finishing off their medical training to become GP's: from time to time their trainers may sit in with them, or they may be videoing themselves: you will be warned if this is happening and you have the right to decline if you so wish; all recordings are later destroyed.

As a teaching practice, the medical records are periodically inspected (by other doctors) to ensure high standards of care are maintained; this is obviously fully confidential, if however you do not wish for your notes to be seen please let us know so that they can be withdrawn.

Jane (our secretary) has left to follow in career in nursing: she has been replaced by Sue, who has experience both as a medical secretary and also as a doctor's receptionist. She will help out the

reception team, by coping with the early morning phone rush

Lesley has moved up the building to work at the PMS homeless project as the hours there fit more easily to her young family's needs. We have recruited a new reception team member to replace her; Susan.. The reception team hours have been increased significantly, in an attempt to ease the problem of telephone access first thing in the mornings.



We also hope to be providing a venesection clinic daily, so that people can come here to have their blood samples taken. Our health care assistant Dawn will be running this.

## **Appointment System:**

In common with many other practices in the country we continue to try to improve the system: approx 80 % of our appointments are currently available at 24 hours notice. The problem is balancing the needs of people with busy diaries, with those of people who become acutely ill!

We are under constant pressure to free 'same day' appointments, but this means sacrificing advance booking ones. Appointments are

available for pre-booking, but they of necessity, have to be limited in quantity: these are released with 24 hours notice if not reserved.

In our patient user surveys the new regimen remains the system of choice for most patients.

The 'triage' consultations, where it is possible to ask for the duty doctor to ring you back to give advice, rather than occupying a full face to face appointment, is proving very popular with users and appears to be an effective use of medical time.

We cannot, however, leave messages on recording devices (for reasons of confidentiality), nor can we say how long it will take to return your call, since demand is hard to anticipate!

If you ask for a telephone consultation, please be available to take it when we call

### **Phone system:**

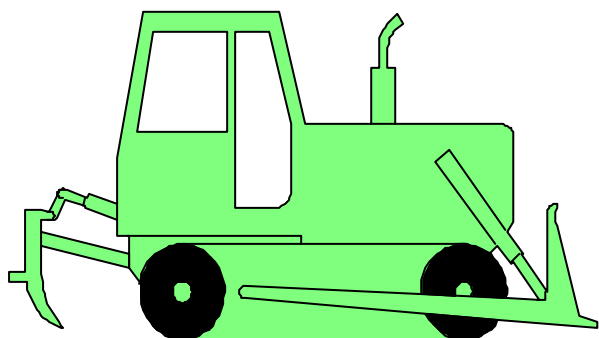
We have had lots of feedback about the early morning scramble to get appointments, and we continue to try to find a way to suit all people. We are currently trying to use more lines, as well as having more 'hands' to answer them.

### **Air Conditioning:**

The air conditioning that we installed 2 years ago has, at last, been connected to the electricity supply: shame the nice weather has almost finished! Still we will be ready for a scorcher next year!

### **Building Update:**

We have finished the internal refurbishment, and created 2 new rooms: one for a GP registrar and the other to house our computer fileserver: this expansion accounts for the narrower appearance of the waiting room!



Two 'cabins' are being added onto the back of the building, to be able to give the manger her own office, at last.

Finally, a further consulting room will be added onto the front of the building: unfortunately this will cause considerable disruption, as the drains will have to be re-sited. When this work is eventually finished, **we promise there will be no more building:** our nerves and ears cannot stand it!

### **Medical Update**

There has recently been several review articles looking at arthritic knees and they show some interesting things:

- **Weight loss** (if appropriate) is vital
- **Daily exercise** is important
- Taking **Glucosamine** (which is available from most health food stores/pharmacies), has been shown to slow down deterioration
- **Steroid injections** (only available after seeing the doctor), help some people, and do not appear to quicken the rate of deterioration of the arthritis.

The importance of drug side effects has been highlighted recently: a large number of hospital admissions being, in some part, due to drug side effects or interactions. This fact emphasises the need to take drugs as directed by the doctor and also to be careful about taking medications bought 'over the counter'

With certain drugs (DMARDS), which are used in Rheumatology, Gastro-enterology and Dermatology, there is a very real risk of serious side effects: we have developed a particular way to monitor patients who need to take these drugs. If you are one of these people please ask for a monitoring form from the reception desk.

Finally, we would like to remind our patients that we have been asked by York City council not to write in support of re-housing requests. If their doctor wants any medical details they will write direct to us (with your permission). **Comments on this newsletter to Di Ruston, practice manager, please.**