



CLINICS OFFER EXPERT CARE TO STROKE PATIENTS

Services for stroke patients have been boosted with two clinics launched in recent months at the hospital.

The clinics offer early intervention for at-risk patients and rehabilitation care for patients after serious strokes.

The new transient ischaemic attack and minor stroke - or TIA - clinic is enabling patients to be seen by a consultant within a week of referral.

It was set up in October by Consultant Neurologist David Perkin to help assess and treat patients quickly, to reduce the risk of more serious problems developing.

Up to four new patients are benefiting from the weekly TIA clinic who would otherwise have to join the routine waiting list for new referrals.

Dr Perkin said: "The idea is to provide a rapid assessment of patients who may be at risk of a major stroke and who may benefit from early medical

or surgical intervention.

"Eventually, I hope to arrange on-site Doppler studies so that as many investigations as possible can be done at Hillingdon, preferably on the day of the outpatient appointment."

The stroke rehabilitation clinic was launched in June this year to offer multidisciplinary care to help patients overcome disabilities caused by strokes.

It has been spearheaded by Dr Rajiv Hanspal, Consultant in Rehabilitation and Disability Medicine, and is run on a regular basis by Dr Bijoy Chakrabarti, to offer intensive help at weekly sessions for a maximum of four people a time.

It is the first time that outpatient care for stroke patients has been coordinated and delivered in the purpose-designed surroundings of the Alderbourne unit. Each clinic is deliberately kept small so patients receive plenty of individual attention.

At present, most referrals are former inpatients at the hospital's Alderbourne Rehabilitation Unit but referrals from GPs are welcome, regardless of whether patients were originally treated at Hillingdon.

Therapists and a dietitian are available as part of the multidisciplinary team to help individuals who could benefit from their expertise at the clinic.

To arrange referrals:

- The TIA clinic - call 0895 279220 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Thursday and 9am to 1.30pm on Friday. A formal letter requesting an appointment should then be forwarded or brought with the patient.

- The stroke rehabilitation clinic - GPs can make referrals by sending a letter and short medical history of the patient to Dr Hanspal at the Alderbourne Rehabilitation Unit.

QUICKER X-RAY RESULTS TO GPs

The department of clinical radiology has introduced a duty radiologist on a permanent basis from Monday to Friday, 9am - 1pm, after a successful one-month trial.

It showed that having a duty radiologist on rota led to a substantial reduction in reporting times.

Dr Isabel Shirley, Clinical Director of Radiology, said: "Plain films for the GP direct access system are now being reported on the same or following working day by the duty radiologist.

"Urgent films are reported on the spot and a report returned with the patient to the GP."

A consultant radiological service is available to GPs by ringing the main department number on 0895 279392, from where calls can be diverted to the duty radiologist.

Dr Shirley added: "We hope that these improvements in our service will be helpful to GP colleagues and would appreciate feedback for further fine tuning of the system."

RISE IN EMERGENCY ADMISSIONS

EMERGENCY admissions from the expanded catchment area for guaranteed admissions have risen nine per cent since July.

The hospital's guaranteed catchment area for GPs referring urgent medical and surgical cases now covers the whole of the Borough of Hillingdon, including Northwood, Ruislip, Eastcote, and the Iwer and Denham parts of Buckinghamshire.

Medical Director Dr Peter Jaffe said: "We continue to welcome emergency referrals from GPs across the extended guaranteed admissions catchment area."

GP

The
HILLINGDON
Hospital

N E W S

NEW CONSULTANTS TAKE UP POST

THREE new consultants have joined The Hillingdon Hospital in recent months - two taking up newly created posts in trauma & orthopaedic and anaesthetic specialities.

The third postholder, who arrived in November, has taken over a vacancy in ophthalmology to help boost services for eye patients.

The appointments strengthen the range of expertise available at the hospital and contribute to the on-going development of all three specialities. We spoke to the appointees about their new roles.



Salah Atrah took up a new post as our fourth consultant surgeon in trauma and orthopaedics in mid-October this year.

Mr Atrah has specialised in this field for 15 years, both overseas and in Britain, coming to us from the Royal London Hospital, where he worked for the past two years.

He has a particular interest in the management of trauma patients, arthroscopic surgery of the knee and major joint replacements - areas of expertise which will complement the specialist interests of the other consultants in the hospital's orthopaedic team.

This post has been created to enable the hospital to expand services for trauma and orthopaedic patients and help them to be seen and treated more quickly.

"A key development, due to be introduced soon, is an increase in the number of trauma clinics. Patients who are referred from the accident and emergency department will be seen in these clinics more promptly, usually the day after coming to the casualty department. This will dramatically improve care for trauma patients.

"In addition to the new patients, other patients who have been operated upon for trauma will also be seen in these clinics," said Mr Atrah, FRCS, who holds a Masters Degree in Trauma and Orthopaedics from the Institute of Orthopaedics.

Dr Cheryl Messer joined us in August to take up a new post as a consultant in anaesthetics with a special interest in chronic pain management.

Her arrival has enabled the hospital's successful chronic pain relief service, set up by Dr Chris Dark, to increase both outpatient clinics and theatre lists to two each week.

"There has been a big demand for this service and it's obviously important to see people with painful conditions as soon as possible", said Dr Messer, whose arrival brings the hospital's total number of consultant anaesthetists up to seven.

Dr Dark and Dr Messer hope to set up an eight-week outpatient pain management programme, designed to help patients cope with long-term pain, beginning in early 1995.

As well as her specialist work in chronic pain relief, Dr Messer has lists in vascular, gynaecological and emergency surgery.

The aim is to do more emergency operating work during normal working hours, with plans to introduce a daily emergency list.



The chronic pain relief service - which also employs two acupuncturists and a clinical psychologist - gets most referrals from GPs.

Before coming to Hillingdon, Dr Messer had a three-year appointment with the former North West Thames Regional Health Authority, working as a senior registrar at Charing Cross, Watford, and most recently Mount Vernon, hospitals.

Her other experience includes five years as an anaesthetist in Hong Kong and a three year research post at San Francisco University in California.



Nicholas Lee, who took up a replacement post as consultant ophthalmologist in early November, has a special interest in all aspects of medical retinopathy, particularly diabetic retinopathy.

He is the second new consultant to join the department within a few months - consultant ophthalmologist Jane Olver joined the hospital earlier this year - to take over joint responsibility for ophthalmic services.

He said: "We are keen to improve the department and would welcome any suggestions about how the service should be developed.

"The recent link with the Western Eye Hospital is itself an important development which we are building upon to boost the quality of the services we are able to offer to patients."

Mr Lee comes to us from University College Hospital. His wide-ranging training, with leading cataract surgeons both at UCH and Croydon Eye Unit, enables him to offer the full range of cataract operations, from sutureless small incision phacoemulsification techniques to more traditional approaches.

He has trained and worked in a number of London teaching hospitals and also in America. He has also written specialist papers focusing on ophthalmic outpatient waiting list initiatives and is currently completing the new ABC of Medical Computing book for the BMJ.

He added: "I hope to offer a high quality service in both general ophthalmology and in my specialist areas of interest."