

# Connect



Quarterly Newsletter for GPs

Issue 3 - Spring 2016



## Dear Colleagues

I am delighted to report that the phased opening of our expanded ED is almost complete and we are starting to see the difference this makes for our patients, although attendances remain high (7% increase in Feb '16 v's Feb 15) Patient Experience Times for six and nine hours treatment times have improved by 12% and 8% respectively v's. Feb of last year.

The continued opening of major bays in the Dept this month combined with the implementation of the Rapid Access Treatment Unit should help to improve the patient waiting times further. The Short Stay Observation Unit in our Paediatric Dept, the first of its kind in the country is now opening on a phased basis since the appointment of two new consultant paediatricians, nurse staff recruitment remains a challenge in this area but one which we are continuing to focus on.

As you will read in the newsletter our hospital continues to demonstrate innovation and initiative in the development of new services i.e. Memory Clinic, opening of the Acute Surgical Assessment Unit and Neurology Research & Assessment Unit which will further enhance the patient care we provide. Please do let us know if there is any specific content you would like included in Connect.

Kind regards

**Lucy Nugent**  
Chief Operations Officer  
Tallaght Hospital

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## GP Liaison Committee Update

**As a broad principle, the group has agreed that a clinician who orders/requests a patient to have any tests, procedures, investigation is responsible for follow up of those results in a timely and safe manner.**

We further requested that specialists and members of their team must not request the GPs to follow up tests/investigations they ordered or they wish to have done as follow up in the community. This is also been raised again at Tallaght Medical Board.

### **Mr John Quinlan, Trauma Lead, Dept of Orthopaedics**

We discussed access for patients to Orthopaedic OPD. Mr John Quinlan advised this situation is improving and reflected in reduced waiting times. We also discussed access of patients to the fracture clinic. A memo has been circulated to all GPs by the hospital advising of process and contact details for fracture referrals. Please fax Ciara @ 01 414 4779 with cover note and diagnosis for appointment for your patients at the fracture clinic.

### **Dr Barbara Ryan, Clinical Lead, Dept of Gastroenterology**

We discussed direct access to OGD and Colonoscopy. Whilst this service is available to all GPs, it has reached capacity. Dr Ryan informed us that some referrals were inappropriate. Guidelines would be on the template for referrals and these referral should be done electronically via Healthlink. This histology referral template will be added to the Tallaght Hospital internet page. Dr Barbara Ryan also advised that all clinical findings and biopsy reports are reviewed by the Gastro Team "as they have a stringent follow up internally of all biopsies" If patients consult their GP waiting for biopsy results then GPs need to advise patients that it takes about four weeks to process the results and that the gastroenterology team will make contact if required.

### **Dr Michael Jeffers, Clinical Director of Laboratory Directorate**

The matter of GPs lack of access to their patient's histology reports was discussed. Whilst this is an issue essentially with regard to the minor surgical clinic not stipulating on the request form "send results to the patient's GP". However Dr Michael Jeffers advised he will discuss this problem with the surgeons. Furthermore Dr Jeffers informed that histopathology result turnaround for minor operations is presently 2-3 weeks and the lab aims for 5 - 7 days.

### **Dr Susanna Frost, Consultant Microbiologist**

Please refer to Chlamydia trachomatis and Neisseria gonorrhoeae STI testing for further information

### **Mr David Wall, Director of ICT Tallaght Hospital**

The Healthmail, secure clinical email, issue was discussed. A directory of Healthmail addresses will be compiled by Tallaght Hospital, this will then promote the ease of access and communication and thus encourage more GPs will sign on to Healthmail. More info <http://www.icgp.ie/healthmail>. He also advised that the electronic referrals plan will introduced initially to Cardiology and Nephrology. ED discharges via Healthlink were also discussed and the need for them to be on a same day/next day basis.

### **Dr Edwina Daly, Paediatric Medicine Consultant**

Please refer to page 2 in this newsletter for further information.

### **Dr Turlough Bolger, Consultant Paediatrics Emergency Medicine**

There was general satisfaction of Paeds ED and their reporting electronically.

At the hospitals request, we have arranged a meeting of the hospital representatives with Dublin South West ICGP Faculty on April 21st.

## Thank You

In the last edition of Connect your assistance in recruiting Parkinson's patients was sought to respond to a survey been undertaken by Dr Richard Walsh in Tallaght Hospital. We are delighted to report that over 1,000 responses has been received, so thank you for your support. The results of what is the largest national observational research project on treatment responses in Parkinson's disease will be published during Parkinson's Awareness Week which runs from April 10th. Please keep an eye on our website for further information [www.tallaghthospital.ie](http://www.tallaghthospital.ie)

# Memory Assessment Clinic Introduced at Tallaght Hospital

**Led by Dr Sean Kennelly a Consultant Physician in Geriatric Medicine a new memory assessment clinic has started in our hospital.**

A focus of this clinic is to formulate diagnosis and support early care in those with mild memory complaints or symptoms. This clinic has evolved as the age profile of people the hospital cares for increases, and as more persons with mild memory complaints present. There is an increasing emphasis on diagnosing dementia or those most at risk of developing dementia, and in particular dementia due to Alzheimer's disease, as early in the course of the disease as possible. Eventually we hope to diagnose it before any significant symptoms of memory loss are evident. While current therapies offer modest symptomatic benefits to persons living with dementia, it's now widely accepted that future disease modifying agents will be most efficacious before any significant symptoms of memory impairment are evident.

The weekly memory assessment clinic is a multidisciplinary service with participation of geriatric medicine physicians, clinical nurse specialists, clinical neuropsychologist, speech & language therapist, nutritionist, and occupational therapist. Patients attending the service have an initial appointment with the clinical nurse specialist who documents



*Pictured from left to right Cathy McHale (Age Related Healthcare Nurse), Deborah Fitzhenry (CNM2 ARHC), Eimear Dignam (Senior Dietitian), Aine Connolly (CNM2), Sean Connelly (Consultant Geriatrician), Neil Austin (Senior Clinical Neuropsychologist). Missing members from the team include Dr. Robert Briggs (NCHD), Dr. Tara Coughlan (Age Related Healthcare Consultant), Dr. Ronan Collins (Physician in Older Adult & Stroke Medicine Consultant) and Prof. Desmond O'Neill (Age Related Healthcare Consultant).*

the nature and progression of symptoms, and completes a detailed standard neuropsychological series of tests to identify issues of mood, behaviour, and different aspects of memory. Given that occasionally persons with memory impairment may be unaware of the extent of their memory difficulties, a family member or friend of the patient are asked to attend this assessment to give their impression on what the key issues are and how they have progressed over time. Brain imaging with either a CT or MRI scan is then arranged. The outcomes from these assessments are then discussed

at a multi-disciplinary consensus diagnosis meeting before the patient and their relative/partner returns to clinic to meet the consultant and receive their diagnosis. The clinics are scheduled in a fashion to enable the patient and medic ample opportunity for discussion of the diagnosis and what the next steps are. This is important as many patients may still be working, driving, or caring for others. Occasionally further imaging or tests are required to clarify the diagnosis.

**For further information on the clinic or to make a referral contact please contact:**  
[sean.kennelly@amnch.ie](mailto:sean.kennelly@amnch.ie)

## The NEW POD

**The Paediatric short stay unit or The POD (Paediatric Observation Department) is now up and running. It is the first dedicated observation department for children in the country and part of the new children's hospital model of care. It is an eight-bedded department situated adjacent to the Children's Emergency Department and is open officially from 10am until 10pm.**

Most children's illnesses traditionally require children to be admitted overnight to hospital for further observation and treatment. The POD delivers a different type of service whereby it delivers this treatment intensively over a few hours with a view of discharging children and avoiding admission. This is not only beneficial to the child and less disruptive to the family but also enables space to be made available in the Emergency Department keeping the flow of patients moving resulting in less waiting time. There are benefits to the hospital as well, with increased bed capacity for inpatient beds and for more serious emergencies.

The POD was named following an internal competition among children attending the hospital. The unit is managed under the stewardship of CNM2 Barbara Collins. Two Paediatricians, Drs. Montasser Nadeem and Edwina Daly have been appointed to ensure a consultant-delivered service at all times. The unit is also staffed by a wonderful team of Paediatrically-trained nurses Maebh Creighton, Dina Murphy, Janette O'Reilly and Jill Williams.

## Efficient information delivery to our GPs

**Through our GP Liaison Committee our local GPs asked the hospital to share information about the care of their patients as they are transferred back to the community, when a patient is waiting GPs will know whether interim treatment or escalation is necessary.**

A fast new solution will let you know if your patients fail to attend the hospital, you will also know who is treating your patient and be able to contact them in emergencies. GPs are now receiving this information electronically to their computer systems (in partnership the national Healthlink hub) where they can review it in a systematic way. Feedback from the GP community has been very positive reflected in an enthusiastic sign up to the Healthlink electronic interface.

Responding to this request, our ICT Team have created a number of notifications including:

- **laboratory results**
- **radiology results**
- **admissions**
- **discharges**
- **discharge summaries**
- **notification of death**

Most recently outpatient appointments, did not attend notifications and waiting list entry notifications have been added to the list of electronic interfaces. It is also planned to add discharge summaries from the Emergency Department. Since going live in January the hospital has sent a copy of all outpatient appointments booked, all did not attend responses and all waiting list entries created each day contributing to our growing reputation as one of the leading hospitals in sharing electronic information with GPs. If you would like to access your information electronically, please contact Healthlink at [info@healthlink.ie](mailto:info@healthlink.ie) or on (01) 882 5606.



If you would like any more information about any articles in the Connect or have suggestions for future editions please do get in touch.

Email: [GPCconnect@amnch.ie](mailto:GPCconnect@amnch.ie)

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## New Unit

*Dr Amy Gillis one of our surgical team appearing on screen at a bedside consultation with Nurse Amber Gill and Professor Paul Ridgway*

**The ASAU – the Acute Surgical Assessment Unit is a new, rapid-access surgical unit designed to fast track surgical patients who present to our Emergency Department (ED).**

The unit looks to expedite care, reduce the strain on our busy ED, reduce patient waiting times and ultimately reduce admissions by providing quick access to senior decision makers and safe, effective outpatient pathways for select surgical issues.

The ASAU is an initiative of the Department of Surgery. It is modelled after ASAU formats in Limerick, Kilkenny, the UK and Tallaght's own AMAU. The pilot project was launched in late May 2015, open from 8am-4pm.

The unit accepts patients with less acute surgical conditions directly from ED triage, patients with conditions such as abscesses, appendicitis, inflammation of the gallbladder and diverticulitis. These patients are seen directly by our ASAU nurse, who is skilled in acute care, and by the on-call surgical team. Our goal is to achieve an expected waiting time for patients from presentation at triage to assessment by the surgical team within 30 minutes. Our pilot project has been a success! We have reduced patient waiting times for this cohort by half, and have begun to reduce admissions with the use of the ASAU review clinic.

We are looking to begin the next phase of the ASAU program, and expand the hours from 8am-6pm and to expand our pilot criteria to accept a broader range of patient conditions. One area within the ASAU that we are keen to expand is our new wheeled robot named "Lucy". In partnership with our ICT department, we have been able to mobilise and integrate "Lucy" into patient care. "Lucy" enables a remote presence for consultants to review patients when unable to be present in person. "Lucy" has been trialled on ward rounds and has been well received by patients. She looks forward to working in the ASAU in the next coming months!

Our ASAU is in its fledgling period, and has shown promise as a means to improve care for our patients. This initiative would not be possible without the steadfast support from Tallaght management and the ED staff. We are able to have this program due to the excellent nursing expertise and the support provided by the Nursing administration.

If you would like to see our 'LUCY' in action please click on this link following her appearance on national tv: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2016/0330/778430-tallaght-hospital-trialling/>

## Chlamydia trachomatis and Neisseria gonorrhoeae STI testing

**Currently the Microbiology Department at Tallaght Hospital refers most of the above tests to the Microbiology Department St James's Hospital.**

The collection system used is the Abbott multi-collect Specimen Collection Kit. The National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) also offers this test using different specimen collection systems, the Gen-Probe Aptima Collection systems.

We audited turnaround times and found that results were available from the NVRL much quicker than SJH. As a result the Microbiology Lab in Tallaght Hospital will refer all Chlamydia trachomatis/ Neisseria gonorrhoeae STI testing now to the NVRL.

It is proposed to switch entirely to the NVRL collection system on the 1st April 2016. Specimens received after that date in the Abbott multi-collect Specimen Collection system will still be processed (for a grace period to allow stocks to be diminished/ replaced) but GPs should be aware of the slower turnaround times.

GPs can order directly from the NVRL. Collection systems can be ordered by:

- 1 Email: [nvrl@ucd.ie](mailto:nvrl@ucd.ie)
- 2 Fax: 01 269 7611
- 3 Swab shop on NVRL website: [www.nvrl.ucd.ie](http://www.nvrl.ucd.ie)

The Microbiology Laboratory at Tallaght will hold these collection systems for in house testing. If any GP requires any further information regarding this change please contact: **Donal Smith, Senior Medical Scientist/Quality Co ordinator, Microbiology Laboratory, Tallaght Hospital Tel: 01 414 2499 or Email: [Donal.smith@amnch.ie](mailto:Donal.smith@amnch.ie)**

## Launch of the National Centre for Pulmonary Fibrosis at Tallaght Hospital



**Professor Seamas Donnelly has recently taken up the Chair of Medicine at Trinity College Dublin. Tallaght Hospital in partnership with Trinity College Dublin have established the National Centre for Pulmonary Fibrosis.**

This is a multidisciplinary clinical partnership that provides state-of-the-art care for patients with Pulmonary Fibrosis. It spans the specialties of Respiratory, Renal, Rheumatology and Care of the Elderly Medicine to provide a one stop shop for patients and their families. As new novel biological therapies become available for patients with pulmonary fibrosis, this specialty centre provides significant expertise for the management of these often complex conditions.

A specialist nurse service, led by Mary Poland, offers support to doctors, patients and their families and she may be contacted by calling 086 210 5695. The Centre offers a rapid referral service for doctors where letters can be faxed (01-896 2988) or emailed to [tallaghtfibrosis@amnch.ie](mailto:tallaghtfibrosis@amnch.ie) to obtain urgent appointments

*Staff of the clinic include: Mary Poland (Lung Fibrosis Nurse) Dr Paul Minnis (Respiratory Consultant) Lorraine Flood (Clerical Administration Support) Dr Saba Khan (Respiratory Registrar) Dr Neil Thompson (Lecturer/Registrar Clinical Medicine) Prof. Seamas Donnelly (Respiratory Consultant and Chair of Medicine).*



## Consultant update

**Dr. Edwina Daly** Consultant General Paediatrician – Paediatric Short Stay Observation Unit  
**Dr. Saeed Khilji** Locum Consultant Medical/Nephrology/Physician  
**Dr. Gillian Murphy** Locum Consultant Radiologist  
**Dr. Diana Gheta** Locum Consultant Rheumatologist

# Tallaght Stroke Support Group

**‘Support groups can play a significant protective role in the maintenance of physical and mental health by reducing isolation through contact and interaction with others’.**

Staff in Tallaght Hospital are working in partnership with a community Primary Care Team (PCT) to set up an initiative for people affected by stroke. Many people affected by stroke report feeling isolated in the community following their diagnosis and patients can feel ‘abandoned’ after their stroke.

Mindful of the number of people affected by stroke, the Stroke Team and PCT from our hospital set up a local Stroke Support Group Tallaght. The team have set a number of main objectives:

- To provide a transition between hospital and home - formalised support available once back in the community setting and to strengthen hospital and community links
- To reduce the feeling of isolation in the community - provide a social outlet for users, in particular benefitting from meeting others going through similar challenges and increase social interactions, wellbeing and quality of life
- To provide education and increase service user’s knowledge of stroke, its associated complications and information on services available.

The group meets on a monthly basis in Tallaght Public Library with over 30 attendees each month made up of people who have had a stroke, family members, friends and carers from Tallaght and the wider area. The group provides an opportunity for people affected by stroke to meet and support each other. Social isolation is a risk factor for a poor outcome after stroke. The group also provides an

opportunity for carers to share their common experiences and find positive solutions to adjusting to living as a family after stroke.

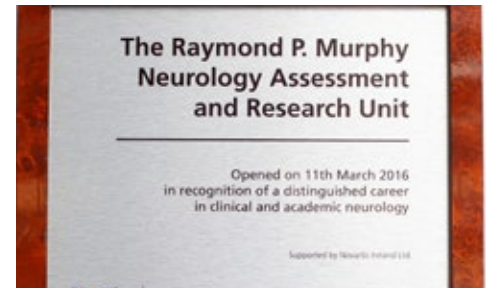
The group is facilitated by our Stroke Team and local PCT providing education, training and support regarding what services are available. Previous speakers have included;

- Voluntary agencies (Headway, Employability, Career’s Association, AWARE etc.).
- Members of the multidisciplinary team; Stroke Consultant, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Social Worker etc.
- Members of the group have given personal experiences of their stroke and recovery journey.

The group is also a means for members to access healthcare professional’s expertise and services that might not be available in their community area and where applicable onward referrals can be made. The Stroke Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Speech & Language Therapist and Physiotherapist can provide specific information and advice on strategies and assistance with medical queries, communication, physical and cognitive difficulties people may be experiencing.

The group has been an effective way of meeting the identified need in an efficient manner and continues to expand with new members attending every month. Please contact Nicola Cogan or Suzanne Greene, Stroke Nurses Tel: 01 414 3219 if you would like further information on this initiative. Please bear it in mind if any of your patients are recovering from a stroke or caring for a person recovering from stroke.

## New Neurology Research & Assessment Unit officially opens



**Tallaght Hospital’s Raymond P Murphy Neurology Assessment & Research Unit was officially opened in March.**

The new room will offer enhanced space to see patients with neurological diseases and was officially opened by recently retired Dr Raymond Murphy, a former neurologist at Tallaght Hospital and previously the Adelaide Hospital. This new facility incorporates a research unit which forms part of the Trinity College Academic Unit of Neurology.

The unit has been equipped with an ocular coherence tomography machine, making the Department of Neurology in Tallaght Hospital the only unit in the country with dedicated access to this technology. This non-invasive imaging technique can be used to generate high resolution, three dimensional images of the retina for use in research of neurological disease and the monitoring of drug complications involving the retina. While the hospital provides services for chronic neurological disease in a catchment area of over 500,000 people, it has not previously had a dedicated space to cater for such patients. The new room has three fully equipped examination bays two comfortable armchairs for patients requiring prolonged periods of observation. In addition nurse specialists will be in a position to provide education to patients and for a Research Fellow in Ataxia and Movement disorders.

## Upcoming education events available for GPs and Practice Nurses

Title	Date / Time	Contact / Bookings	Cost	Location
Venepuncture & Cannulation	<b>11.00am-1.00pm</b> 05.04.2016 19.04.2016	Clodagh McLoughlin <a href="mailto:Clodagh.mcloughlin@amrch.ie">Clodagh.mcloughlin@amrch.ie</a>	€50.00	Two Rock Clinical Skills Lab, Centre for Learning & Development.
Radiation Protection Course for Non-Radiology Doctors and Health Care Professionals	<b>8.00am-12.40pm</b> 07.04.2016	Sinead Fagan - 01-414 3170 <a href="mailto:Sinead.fagan@amrch.ie">Sinead.fagan@amrch.ie</a>	€80.00 – cheques to be made payable to ‘The Haughton Institute’	Robert Graves Postgraduate Centre, Centre for Learning & Development



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