MedEx Comes to Tallaght

Last week saw the launch of an innovative health initiative to South Dublin. Tallaght University Hospital, South Dublin County Council and DCU have come together to bring medically supervised exercise classes and educational workshops to south Dublin for the first time.

MedEx has been operating in DCU for the past 10 years and during that time it has grown to become one of the largest centres of its kind in Europe, hosting over 700 participants every week. MedEx Tallaght has started in the Tallaght Leisure Centre. The community based chronic illness rehabilitation programme will offer structured and supervised exercise classes to enable people with a diverse range of illnesses to exercise in a safe environment in order to maintain or gain fitness during or after treatment. Patients with serious and chronic diseases such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, cancer, peripheral vascular disease and neurodegenerative conditions can avail of the programme and new programmes will commence this year for those with chronic pain, heart failure, pulmonary hypertension, cystic fibrosis and for renal failure patients on dialysis.

There will be a specific focus on creating programmes for patients with mental illness and memory complaints in Tallaght as a recently completed three year HSE funded evaluation of MedEx demonstrated the positive effects exercise had on patients’ psychological wellness and cognition. The evaluation also highlighted the positive impact the programme has on strength, aerobic capacity, body composition, inflammatory markers, fasting glucose, physical activity levels, blood pressure and falls risks.

“MedEx represents a form of social prescribing, where GP’s, consultants nurses and other primary care professionals can refer people to local, non-clinical services that will contribute to their overall happiness and recovery. Structured and supervised exercise classes have been proven to promote psychological wellness and improve cognition. The MedEx programme will be a really positive service for the entire south Dublin community and we are looking forward to working with patients who are suffering from chronic and serious illnesses such as memory complaints and mental illness who will particularly benefit” commented Professor Sean Kennelly, Consultant Physician in Geriatric and Stroke Medicine in TUH at the launch.

How to Refer to MedEx in Tallaght Leisure Centre

Please send a brief referral letter addressed to Dr Noel McCaffrey, MedEx, Tallaght Leisure Centre, Fortunestown Way, Whitestown, Dublin 24.

The referral letter must contain the following information:
- Patient name, address, DOB
- Patient contact details including phone number
- Primary diagnosis
- Comorbidities
- Medications
- Any specific comments, concerns or suggestions you wish to add about

What will happen after referral?

The patient will be contacted directly by Tallaght Leisure Centre to offer an appointment at the next induction session. As the referring GP you will receive a letter following the induction to confirm that the patient has commenced in MedEx or to let you know that the patient has not commenced.

You will receive update reports twice yearly containing details of adherence and of outcome test results. The standard outcomes captured at baseline and twice yearly will be
- BMI
- waist-hop ratio
- handgrip strength
- sit to stand score (lower body strength)
- Six minute time trial distance (aerobic capacity)
- Quality of Life score (EQ 5D)

Note that MedEx is a not for profit project aimed at being self-sustaining based on modest payments per visit. The cost per visit will be €5.

Summer 99 is here again!

Now in its fourth year, the Summer 99 charity cycle has raised €65,000 for the Intensive Care Unit, Stroke and Renal Services. Taking place on June 23rd the End of Life Nursing Service was announced as the recipient of the funds at the cycle launch.

Monies raised this year will go towards the refurbishment of two family rooms in the Hospital. The rooms will be designed to provide families with a quiet and peaceful environment to meet members of the team caring for their relative, receive bad news in private and also enable family members to stay overnight on the ward if their loved one is seriously ill or dying. The rooms are located on the Maguire and Crampton Wards and are currently used for storage.

The charity cycle has grown hugely in popularity with over 300 cyclists taking part since the cycle started. Registration is €50 and closes on June 15th or when the 200th cyclist registers. The entry fee includes refreshments which will be provided throughout the day, as well as a cycling jersey. Cyclists have a choice between a 50km route and a 99km route. The routes start and finish at the Hospital and takes in scenic areas of the Wicklow mountains including Brittas Bay and Blessington Lakes. If you are interested in getting up on your bike you can register for the cycle through this link.
Vasculitis is an autoimmune kidney disease that causes destruction of small blood vessels, resulting in reduced blood flow, with consequent organ and tissue damage. It is estimated that there are 1,000 people in Ireland with ANCA vasculitis. Vasculitis patients across the island of Ireland are being encouraged to download the free personalised app, developed by patientMpower, which will help patients stay well, manage their medication and interact with clinical teams. The app will collate data for the research study, such as patients’ daily activity, location and blood results, to help identify and validate the environmental and clinical reasons for vasculitis flare.

The study, which is being led by Professor of Nephrology Mark Little at the Hospital will seek to develop artificial intelligence techniques that will assist physicians in predicting the risk of flare, thereby helping to get the dose of immune-suppressing drugs correct. As the second largest provider of dialysis in the country, Tallaght University Hospital has the opportunity to use the outcome of this research to improve patient pathways for rare immune disorders like vasculitis.

The work is being performed in conjunction with the Vasculitis Ireland Network, which also comprises vasculitis clinicians in St. Vincent’s University hospital, Cork University Hospital, University Hospital Galway and Daisy Hill Hospital in Northern Ireland, alongside the national patient organisation, “Vasculitis Ireland Awareness”. Vasculitis patients can download the personalised app for free which works on both apple (iOS) and Google android devices. The app can be downloaded here: onelink.to/p6pyja.

Pictured at the launch of the study were from left to right Declan O’Sullivan, Director of ADAPT, Professor Mark Little Consultant Nephrologist at Tallaght University Hospital, Jason Wyse Assistant Professor of Statistics and Professor Lucy Hederman School of Computer Science & Statistics Trinity College Dublin.