

A Patients Participation Group

This is the fourth Newsletter produced by the Lawson Practice Patients Participation Group which was formed in 2008. The group meets monthly to exchange and discuss views about the services provided in the Lawson Practice. The Practice Manager (Yvonne Pope) and Dr Jonathon Tomlinson meet with a diverse group of patients from the Lawson Practice who represent a mix of gender, ethnic groups and age groups – and between them have experienced most of the services offered by the practice.

The purpose of such groups is to discuss general developments in the Practice, to be aware of the wider context in which the Practice has to operate and to act as a sounding board and a channel for communication with the patients. It should be stressed that this is not a place to discuss individual patients' concerns or issues. Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) are being formed in a growing number of practices and there is a National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP) which we have joined. It has a website (www.napp.org.uk) which gives a good introduction to the aims and objectives of Patient Participation Groups (and you can find copies of our Newsletters on-line there as pdf files). In addition it is good to hear that the government, through the Department of Health, is providing funding to support the development of Patient Participation Groups. They have recognised that this collaboration between patients and Practice staff improves both the quality of service provided in a Practice and patients' understanding of primary care services. This activity is being endorsed and supported by the BMA (British Medical Association), the NHS Alliance (the association for NHS management) and the RCGP (the Royal College of General Practitioners). See the NAPP website (www.napp.org.uk) for more general information and read on for details of the Lawson Practice PPGs plans for 2010.

Plans for a Patient Information Centre at the Lawson Practice



(image from www.napp.org.uk)

You will all have noticed that the Lawson Practice is just building an extension! As well as adding much needed consulting rooms and other medical facilities, it will include a meeting room that will be used for Patient Participation Group (PPG) activities and other meetings. The NHS in this area of London is managed by the City and Hackney Primary Care Trust (PCT) that also has plans to develop new Polyclinic and Mental Healthcare facilities on the St Leonard's site. This will make the Lawson Practice a key GP service in the centre of this East London NHS services hub. So it is an excellent time for us to develop and broaden the initial activities that have been undertaken by the Patient Participation Group and in the last Newsletter we announced that we have received an Award from the Royal College of GPs to support the PPG's work in developing a Patient Information Centre.

We plan to initiate a broadly based series of patient services focussed around a physical 'Patient Information Centre', an associated web site and a PC that will be available for looking at medical information websites. After discussion with local community groups, the first activity will be to explain the proposed plans and undertake a patient survey (in English, Turkish, Kurdish, Bengali and

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Vietnamese) to see just what facilities and types of information are wanted by the Lawson Practice patients. So we will be asking you to fill in a questionnaire about what sort of information you would like to see available for you to consult.

As a guide, we envisage that the Patient Information Centre will offer:

- A wide range of information leaflets from a variety of NHS, charity and advice centres
- Access to DVDs, computer based information services and controlled access to selected healthcare websites
- A variety of events, based around the themes of the Department of Health's 'Current Campaigns' and East London Health Information initiatives
- Evening events that include 'MOT health check' presentations and discussions
- An Expert Patient Programme of events, where patients can talk about their experiences of treatment and living with illnesses.

The Patient Information Centre will be launched when the building extension to the Practice is finished towards the end of this year.

Let's walk together! - a 'Walking for Health' initiative



We need 30 minutes of moderate activity five times a week to keep healthy. Regular walking improves people's health. Do you lack the impetus to do this in the city centre? Are you reluctant to go walking alone? The PPG wants to encourage and support our patients to go for regular walks, in company with others, in the local parks (Shoreditch Park is 300 metres from the Surgery and Haggerston Park and London Fields are nearby). This will be a social event, lead by qualified Volunteer Walk Leaders who will set regular targets for the walkers, ensure their health and safety, monitor and support their exercise and generally offer encouragement and advice to the participants.

This initiative is supported by the NHS (<http://www.whi.org.uk/index.asp>) and Walking for Health objectives (<http://www.whi.org.uk/index.asp>). Hackney Community Services are providing training for Volunteer Walk Leaders and several PPG members are training. We have also applied for some funding to produce a leaflet for patients, purchase pedometers, water bottles and achievement badges, and to organise half-yearly walks at interesting places as a 'reward' to those who participate regularly in the walks.

We plan to start the walks in the Spring (announcements will be made on posters in the Surgery) and envisage two levels of walks:

- Starter Walks - walking for patients who are sedentary and whose health is 'at risk',
- Improving Walks - encouraging the majority of patients to increase their exercise in a social setting.

So why walk? - In a single phrase - to improve our general health!

The NHS web site says - walking is good for your heart and lungs, and improves cardiovascular fitness. It's a weight-bearing activity, so it can help improve bone density. At the same time it's a low impact activity, so it won't strain your joints- **and almost everyone can do it.**

Did you know?

1. To look after patients better and to improve continuity, the practice now operates in teams. This means that you will be looked after by any of the doctors or nurses in the team of your choice. They will get to know you and your medical conditions really well. They will meet weekly to ensure they are all up to date with our situations. Administrative staff are also allocated to support the teams. Certain staff have specific roles (eg Practice Manager, Nurse Practitioner) and will continue to

work for all patients.
2. These changes mean that we all need to let the Reception staff know which is the team of our choice.
3. Some patients are concerned whether this new arrangement prevents them from seeing other doctors than those in their chosen team. For example, there may be occasions where a patient wants to see a specific woman doctor; or where a patient and doctor have invested some time in understanding an illness that is on-going or recurring. The new arrangements do not affect

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these relationships, and patients should continue to ask to see that specific doctor when contacting the Practice.

The staff

We do a short introduction to some of the staff in each Newsletter.

Dr Jon Fuller



I moved to the Lawson Practice in 1986 from Lower Clapton Health Centre where I worked from 1979. I am a Senior Lecturer in Medical Education at Barts and The London School for Medicine and Dentistry. As head of the Centre for Medical Education I take part in the teaching and also train others to teach. This means I work part time in the practice, which I know makes some of my patients frustrated. I have been part of the practice since it was two doctors and two receptionists. We have always tried to deliver high quality care, and I am proud of our achievements, although there is more to do. I have now been here long enough to see families through a generation, which is a great privilege. I love working in Hackney, and have done so most of my professional life. I trained at Barts and have worked in the Old Metropolitan, Hackney, Queen Elizabeth, St Leonard's and German Hospitals. In fact it seemed that hospitals closed down after I stopped working in them! I have two children, one of whom is a doctor in south London and one of whom works in the music business. My wife, who was working in medical education at the Whittington, has now retired. I spend time on my allotment in Spring Hill growing fresh veg and flowers for the family.

Melanie Hayes, Healthcare Assistant



I have been working at The Lawson Practice for nearly 8 years. When I first came here I didn't have any clinical experience at all but have been trained to do a number of tasks over the years. I carry out a number of duties including health checks, flu jabs, ear irrigation and assisting with minor surgery clinics, which I absolutely love. I enjoy the fact that no two days are ever the same and I get to meet new people everyday. For the last year or so I have been going out twice a month to do housebound visits which I find very rewarding. I enjoy the fact that we all work very closely as a

team making The Lawson Practice a great place to work. We are continuously changing the way we deliver our service to the community so that they get the best healthcare possible.

Jane Fullbrook, Receptionist



I have been a receptionist at the Lawson Practice for nearly 19 years. As you can imagine there have been a lot of changes and this year will be no exception with the new extension going up. As well as my reception duties I am responsible for entering the details about clinics into the computer. I am fortunate to work with a great group of people and coming to work is a pleasure - I hope to work here for another 19 years.

The doctors column

Here we cover some items about the practice in each newsletter.

Building of the Practice extension has begun and has been held up whilst some asbestos found in the site is removed. This process is being performed very carefully under supervision of Health & Safety officials. Unfortunately, it will delay the building overall, which hopefully will now be completed in Spring 2011.

Sexual health



For our health topic in this Newsletter we have chosen sexual health. The NHS (www.nhs.uk) reports that in the UK, the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) has been rising since the 1990s. The most affected age group continues to be 16-24 year olds. Even though they account for just 12% of the population, young people account for more than half of all STIs diagnosed in the UK. Though, due to the availability of Viagra and hormone replacement therapy (HRT), STIs are also increasing in the over 40 year-olds.

So it is important for us all to know how to protect our health and avoid unwanted pregnancy, whilst enjoying a fulfilling, exciting, safe sex life.

Protection from sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

It is worth repeating that condoms are still the only contraceptive that protects against pregnancy as well as giving protection from sexually transmitted infections. The NHS Choices website (see the details of the link given below) gives a very clear description of how to put on and use a condom.

Chlamydia is the most commonly diagnosed sexually transmitted infection among under-25s. It is important to be tested and to have treatment (both of which are simple and available at the Lawson Practice) because, although there are commonly no symptoms, there is a long-term risk of it causing a reduction in fertility.

The Lawson Practice offers free sexual health screening for all young people from 16 - 25 years old. No appointment is needed, the test only involves giving a urine sample and it is confidential.

Are you forgetful?

The biggest reason that the contraceptive pill fails is that people forget to take it! If you are concerned, then you should talk to your GP or one of the Practice Nurses about long-term contraception. There are three very effective ways of doing this now - by an implant, by injection or using a coil. All are reliable and can last from three to five years. Fertility returns immediately after a coil or implant have been removed and can take up to a year to return after stopping the injections.

In an emergency

Emergency contraception is available from the Lawson Practice - again without an appointment and in confidence.

Seeking help and advice

All the doctors at the Lawson Practice have had training about dealing with sexual matters. This means that you can talk to them in confidence about contraception, STIs, sexual problems or about fertility and wanting to get pregnant.

The Lawson Practice wants to encourage people of all ages to come in, be seen, be advised and be helped.

Other sources of information

The NHS Choices website has a very comprehensive section, in straightforward, factual, yet direct language addressing all aspects of sexual practice and sexual health (visit <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Sexualhealthtopics/Pag>

[es/Sexual-health-hub.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Sexualhealthtopics/Pages/Sexual-health-hub.aspx) . The site includes a lot of clear, short videos on all aspects of sexual health and behaviour addressing both heterosexual and gay people. If you read the NHS web site it also gives links to a wide variety of factual information sources.

In addition, the City and Hackney NHS have three sexual health clinics offering a very wide set of services, again in confidence. These clinics are at:

The Ivy Centre: St Leonards Primary Care Centre, Nuttall Street, London N1 5LZ

Lower Clapton Health Centre: 36 Lower Clapton Road, London E5 0PQ

John Scott Health Centre: Green Lanes, London N4 2NU

...And finally, something different

Here is a recipe for a healthy, winter warming soup especially for those who like beetroot - provided by Doreen Gilmour, a PPG member:

Russian-style Soup

Ingredients

1 large onion, chopped
1 large carrot, chopped
2 sticks celery, chopped
300gm (10oz) swede, finely chopped
1 bay leaf
900ml (1½pt) stock – chicken or vegetable
1 medium sized Cox's apple
2 tablespoons lemon juice (I use more juice because I like it lemony)
250gm (9oz) cooked beetroot
Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

Put onion, carrot, celery, swede and bay leaf into a large pan and pour in 600ml (1 pint) of the stock. Bring to the boil, cover with a lid and simmer for 20 minutes.

Peel, core and grate the apple, then mix together with the lemon juice. Stir the beetroot and lemony apple into the pan. Bring back to the boil, cover and simmer gently for 5 minutes. Allow the soup to cool for 10 minutes and discard the bay leaf.

Transfer to a blender or food processor and blitz for a few seconds until smooth. Return to the pan and add as much of the remaining stock as you think necessary. Season to taste and heat through until piping hot. This is quite a fruity soup, so it might appeal to children and it also contains no fat!

Getting in touch with the Lawson Practice Patients Participation Group (L3PG)

We would very much like to hear from patients. The Patient Participation Group may be contacted by leaving a written note with the practice receptionists.

The following people are members of the L3PG:

Dr Jonathon Tomlinson, Yvonne Pope, Ellen Aguilar, Sharon Boyea, Doreen Bullock, Alf Camp, Kim Cole, Emine Demirbas, Veronica Duberry, Doreen Gilmour,

Stewart Harvey-Wilson, Christine Russell, Nusret Sen, | Josie Williams and Gulay Yildirim.
(George) Roger Till (who prepared this Newsletter),