

Brevis



Newsletter of the Illawarra Division of General Practice
- April 2009

Another colleague passes

To the great sadness of many of his long term patients and particularly of his devoted staff, Dr Garry Gow passed away on Monday 30th March. Garry will be remembered for his quiet demeanor and his sincere compassion. Our thoughts go to Lucia, his wife, and nursing manager at TWH who once worked with us at the Division. Our thoughts are also with his daughter and staff who remained a constant source of support for Garry.

And another starts

The Graduate School of Medicine was always going to influence local general practice, but this time it has in a very special way. Sarika Sundar may have lost her GP dad in February but she starts to retrace his footsteps this year as a recent entrant of the GSM. That's one student we hope stays on in the Illawarra. Congratulations Sumathi.

Changes to the Mobility Parking Scheme.

From May, the new Mobility Parking

Scheme application will include a medical review section so that the applicant's medical fitness to drive can be assessed. The new forms will be available after 18 May 2009 at www.rta.nsw.gov.au. The RTA requests that from that date all old forms are destroyed. They almost certainly meant recycled.

Argus and you and your patients and the State and the Commonwealth

Following representation from local Divisions the Area Health Service has decided to transfer clinical information direct to GPs for downloading into clinical software packages. This marks a significant improvement in relations between Divisions and the Area Health Service which initially had decided on decades old technology called faxing, though this will still be an option. The messaging system to be used for this is known as Argus. This initiative has fortuitously coincided with the Commonwealth's decision to expand the requirements of the IT PIP which include secure messaging connectivity, eg Argus. Therefore, the Division, through

Brevis

OTiS will soon be in a position to assist both GPs and the Area to improve clinical communications by installing Argus at practices.

OTiS services to practices

In 2008 OTiS provided IT services to 52 practices, or 56% of our membership. Two of the biggest jobs included the IT setup of the two new Shellharbour General Practices.

Thoughts, general practice and Rugby Union

At the time of writing Dr Keith Kahn is recovering from a major CVA. Keith has been a big man in many ways in his life not just for having represented the Australian Armed Forces team in Rugby Union. Keith has never shirked a challenge and he isn't going to start now. We wish you and your family and their families well as you go in to bat again Keith.

Database update

All practices have now been contacted to update GP workforce details. This work is vitally important

in making accurate supporting statements to NSW Health for Area of Need Applications and for making the case for workforce support to local politicians.

A kilo of patients

Following a spike of referrals in February when 84 young people were referred from external agencies, the **headspace** practice expects to welcome its thousandth patient sometime in late May. This happy event coincides with the announcement of further funding for headspace Illawarra into 2010.

Too many patients

A week after opening, the Shellharbour Medical Practice, opened by Jennie George on Monday 23rd March, had a week long waiting list. Hard to imagine what it will be like after a year. We expect it won't be long before they apply for Area of Need status.

A feature of the opening was the support that George Albert and colleagues got from local GPs who also attended. That's real collegiality.

But more psychologists

The Division now employs eleven Psychologists eight of whom work with the Clinical Psychology Service jointly run with Lifeline. One of those (Clair McLeod) will soon be seeing patients with Perinatal Depression. Having been delivered of twins at 26 weeks Claire has a newly awakened practical understanding of things difficult.

Headspace has employed a third Clinical Psychologist in an attempt to reduce the 6 week waiting list for adolescents.

More baby talk

There are currently 222 GPs on the Antenatal Shared Care Program in the Illawarra. Eight new GPs have been accredited this year already whilst another 7 GPs are waiting to be accredited.

The percentage of patients at delivery having GP shared care is 24%. The total C/S rate is 2.8% lower than the C/S rate for Wollongong Hospital.

PRP makes a splash

Sporting brilliant Toshiba Chinese regalia, John Hogg was one of three local doctors to launch the new PRP Diagnostic Imaging Centre by clubbing open a sake barrel to the frenzied war cry of other guests. We welcome PRP to town, specifically to 34 Kenny St. If you or one of your patients need a 4D ultrasound or a 320 slice CT scan, they're available on 42269711.

eMR

The Area has recently introduced the Electronic Medical Record into the Illawarra (TWH). For this to work GP details need to be up to date for the test results to go out to the correct place, as well as DOCMAIL and discharge summaries.

So, when new doctors arrive (particularly GP Registrars who have a limited shelf life), please contact Helen Puris at Shellharbour Hospital as she has the job of updating the database as well as keeping George in check.

Illawarra GPs lead again

The number of HMRs claimed by Illawarra GPs in 2008 increased by 47% to 1337; the second highest number of HMRs claimed in NSW. However, in January the number reached 184, the highest in NSW and second nationally.

Changes to DOCS

DOCS is to be set up as a service for high risk children while other services will be contracted to investigate lower risk cases. Stay tuned.

A Trial to Prevent Type 1 Diabetes

The Type 1 Diabetes Prevention Study is an Australian trial investigating whether intranasal administration of insulin will reduce the rate of development of type 1 diabetes in at-risk individuals. Visit

Brevis

the website at www.stopdiabetes.com.au for more details, or ring 1300 138 712 for an information pack.

Budding GP researchers

Dates for upcoming PHReNET workshops are as below:

- 21 April - Open research and evaluation advice sessions
- 28 April - Introduction to statistical concepts Workshops

To attend people need to be members of PHReNET (which is free to join). Further details can be found at: <http://notes.med.unsw.edu.au/cphceweb.nsf/page/Join%20Network>

Cognitive intervention or brain-training: the evidence to date

There is increasing interest in cognitive training and a growing number of “braintraining” products are entering the market. Manufacturers claim, amongst other things, that these programs will delay or even reverse cognitive decline and dementia. A team of researchers from the University of Connecticut and The Brown University, Providence, undertook a systematic review

of randomized controlled trials of cognitive interventions in which healthy elderly people were given some form of brain training.

After extensive searching, the team identified only ten good-quality randomized controlled trials of cognitive interventions in the healthy elderly. The team found no evidence to support the notion that structured cognitive intervention programs (braintraining) delay or slow progression of Alzheimer’s disease in healthy elderly people.

From the Dementia CRC

Superclinic

An architect has been appointed to design the Shellcove practice which will also house Movement Medicine. Tenders for a pathology provider have closed with submissions from three applicants. The DA is expected to be submitted in July.

The Board has appointed Dr Stephen Lyon to coordinate engagement of current GP Registrars and those of 2010.