



*Dear friends,*

We're slightly late with our winter newsletter, but not too late to wish you a happy, healthy 2011 and to hope that you had the Christmas you wanted.

The leaders of all political parties are talking about communities or big societies and I reckon we are doing our bit in trying to build a community around our doctors' surgery. We had some splendid turn-outs for our PPG events in 2010, and we have some exciting ones in the offing. Our next one will be on Bowel Cancer, presented by a leading consultant, Mr Anthony Antoniou, from the Chelsea & Westminster Hospital. This disease has now reached epidemic proportions, and most of us know someone who has suffered from this awful disease. Some patients are sensible and know what to look for; others ignore the symptoms and pay the price. Make sure you know enough to save your life – come to the meeting. We will give you advance notice as soon as we have a date and a venue.

Our Dementia Day last September was a great success (see report below). The demand for seats was far greater than our capacity. In the end we managed to squeeze 60 into our 40-seater lecture room, the rest we had to refuse. The PPG event lasted all afternoon with very brilliant speakers, and stalls manned with helpers giving out useful information. We are so grateful to the professionals for giving up their time to come and talk to us and for such valuable advice. It was so successful we plan to have a follow-up.

Keep your eye on our notice board at the surgery for news of forthcoming events. Better still, make sure we have your e-mail address so that you get as much advance notice as possible.

*Best wishes to you all,*

*Gillian Guy, (PPG Chair)*

### **PPG ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA EVENT** **A day of care and hope**

On 30 September 2010 the Victoria Medical Centre PPG held an ambitious Alzheimer's and Dementia event at the surgery, which was eagerly attended by patients, professionals and carers.

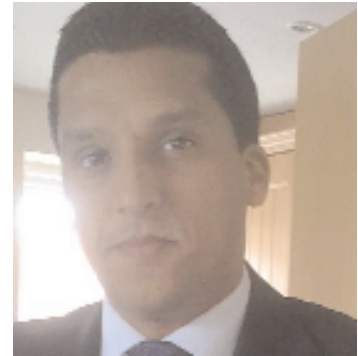
First to speak was Jasmine Scott, dementia adviser for Westminster, who explained that there is a five-year plan to improve help for dementia sufferers and their carers. It appears that Westminster residents are very fortunate to have lots of ways of getting early assessment and diagnosis. The second speaker was Claire Hawman of Admiral Nursing who said that we are also lucky in Westminster to have so much support for carers. One of Claire's tips for carers is not to argue with the person suffering from dementia, but rather to try to encourage them. Most importantly, rest is essential for both carers and patients. Other speakers came from the Westminster Carers Service, Advocacy Plus, and Age UK (the new name for Age Concern). The latter do home visits to help patients and their carers with assessment advice.

The last speaker was Dr Claudia Wald, Consultant Psychiatrist for South Westminster Central and NW London NHS Foundation Trust and Westminster Memory Service. Dr Wald explained that there are many forms of dementia, Alzheimer's is just one of them. She stressed the importance of early assessment and diagnosis, so if you think a relative, a friend or even you might be suffering from dementia, try to get advice immediately for anyone in that situation.

One of the questions asked was how we can help ourselves to delay the onset of dementia. Dr Wald advised keeping the brain as active as possible by doing crosswords, Sudoku and socialising. A healthy diet is also recommended. Your GP will help with a referral, or you can refer yourself to the dementia clinic (which does have a waiting list).

***For more details about the meeting and the services available in Westminster please go to the PPG website, see over page.***

### **NEW FACES AT THE VICTORIA MEDICAL CENTRE**



#### **New Practice Manager**

As of September 2010, Mr Aziz Pandor is our new practice manager. Aziz Pandor qualified in Primary Health Care Management at Queen Mary's School of Medicine and has worked for 10 years in the healthcare field. He is keen to develop our existing services and be part of innovating new ways of working in general practice.

'I am delighted to be the new Practice Manager of Victoria Medical Centre' he says. 'Taking this new position has provided me with an exciting opportunity to develop the organisation even further and to help improve the quality of care delivered by this forward-thinking practice. I look forward to working with the existing team and meeting a large number of patients over the next few months. I will be attending various PPG meetings and would welcome any comments or suggestions about ways of improving our services.'

Please contact Mr Pandor direct to discuss any matters further, including raising complaint issues.

#### **New staff**

Fatima Reis has joined Dee and Mia at reception and has already become a popular member of the reception team, and Angela Ratcliff has joined the nursing team. Rosie Mason will be returning as a part time nurse in April following the birth of her baby girl.

Dr Farah Latif-Montgomery has left to join her husband in New Zealand and Dr Nicola Buxton will also be leaving at the end of January. Two new doctors will be starting in the spring, and Wendy Drakes is our new medical secretary.

## IF YOU BOOK IT, KEEP IT!

The number of patients not keeping their appointments is still very high. Please let the practice know – even on the day – if you are unable to attend so that the time can be made available to others in need.

### QUESTIONS YOU FORGOT TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

On 10 December 2010, the PPG organised an event designed to give patients an opportunity to put questions to John Lumley, Emeritus Professor of Vascular Surgery, University of London and Honorary Consultant Surgeon, St Bartholomew, Great Ormond St and National hospitals, and his colleague Dr Brian Fine, Honorary Senior Lecturer, Kings College, London, School of Medicine, and formally Principal General Practice Consultant in Mental Health. Questions were submitted anonymously in advance, and Professor Lumley grouped them around 8 topics:

1. What are the survival rates for breast and prostate cancer in the UK and how important are early diagnosis, treatment and prevention?
2. What are the causes and treatment of fluctuations in 'normal' body temperature?
3. What are 'good' and 'bad' cholesterols, their effects and means of prevention?
4. What are the best treatments for muscular problems and the benefits and risks of elective surgery for joint replacements and conditions such as varicose veins?
5. How can you identify and reduce the side effects of treatments such as chemotherapy?
6. What are the causal factors in arterial disease?
7. How can patients and doctors assess the risks of harmful side effects from prescription medicines?
8. What are the benefits and risks associated with non-prescription medicines such as aspirin and paracetamol?

The responses were far reaching and informative. Recurring themes were the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle and eating habits, to consult your GP and listen to your pharmacist before turning to specialist advice – and also knowing what questions to ask.

Our PPG event has helped Professor Lumley and Dr Fine in the development of a much-needed website designed to answer patients' questions in clear and simple language that everyone can understand.

### National NO SMOKING Day 9 March 2011

Ever thought of quitting? Now's your chance. Why not get ready to stop smoking from 9 March? Pick up the phone NOW and make an appointment with our Health Care Assistant Pauline or one of the nurses for help on how to stop.



### YOUR PPG NEEDS YOU

The PPG needs volunteers. If you are interested in joining the committee, helping with the arrangements, suggesting speakers or workshop topics or helping with the newsletter please attend the AGM and contact Gillian Guy at [gillianmguy@btinternet.com](mailto:gillianmguy@btinternet.com)

### NEW SERVICES

#### Exercise classes for pre- and post-natal mothers

In response to popular demand Rachel Russell who is a personal trainer qualified in pre- and post-natal exercise will be holding classes in the surgery from Saturday 29 January. Please pick up a leaflet from reception or contact Rachel at [rachel\\_russell@btinternet.com](mailto:rachel_russell@btinternet.com)

#### New Branch Surgery

In 2009 the Victoria Medical Centre won a bid to open an NHS branch surgery in Mayfair. The local residents had lobbied for a new surgery following the closure of Dr Atkinson's Practice in 2007 and helped to choose us to deliver the healthcare services.

On 13 December 2010 Lees Place Medical Centre opened in the heart of Mayfair and we already have 200 patients registered. Patients can register if they live in the W1 area, and any patient who is already registered

with the main surgery and who lives in the catchment area is welcome to register at Lees Place if it would be more convenient. This can be done in person during the surgery opening hours, by post or on line via our website [www.victoriamedicalcentre.com](http://www.victoriamedicalcentre.com).

The doctors are based there from the main surgery on a rota system, and the opening hours are the same as for the Victoria Medical Centre.

Noelene Shekell is the manager at the Mayfair surgery and Edyta Dziuba has joined her at reception. Gillian Smith is the full time practice nurse. More services will be offered once more patients have joined.

The address is Lees Place Medical Centre, 11 Lees Place, W1K 6LN and the phone number is 020 7036 6060.

!!!! The PPG is looking for a volunteer from Lees Place to be on the PPG committee to represent the patients at the new branch surgery. Please contact Gillian Guy if you are interested.

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## FORTHCOMING PPG EVENTS

**Topic**  
BOWEL CANCER

**Speaker**  
Mr Anthony Antoniou  
Senior Consultant  
Chelsea & Westminster Hospital

**Date**  
to be announced

**AGM**  
Plus a presentation by Aziz Pandor,  
our new Practice Manager

in the Group Room, ground floor,  
Victoria Medical Centre  
(with refreshments)

**Date**  
25 February  
12.00 noon for 12.30

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