

The PPG is about
PARTICIPATION -
your participation.

Why not come along and
join us at the next event
and have your say . . .



PPG EVENT: BRAIN DISORDERS, 30 September 2016 at VMC

Over 30 patients attended a talk by Dr Angus Kennedy, the clinical lead for neurology at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. Dr Kennedy explained the diagnostic dilemma of his job as that of an electrician finding the point of the electrical failure in the body.

Using his own drawings as an aide memoire he led us through the various problems we face, from the serious: Parkinson's disease, stroke, migraine and dementia to the less serious: dizziness and pins and needles of the arm or leg. He explained how the problems could be diagnosed by a combination of scans locating the exact site of the problem. Dr Kennedy's talk made very clear his interest in and commitment to his patients.

We were also very lucky to have a stroke survivor, Lynda Fussell, speak to us. Lynda suffered a stroke while at a yoga class in 2012. She was taken to Charing Cross Hospital for emergency care and then to Chelsea and Westminster for recovery. The stroke had affected one side of her body but not her speech. Once her condition had

stabilised she attended the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery to start the process of recovering the use of that side of her body.

Four years later, Lynda is mobile with a stick but told us that it is only with a continuing programme of exercise that she maintains this mobility.

There was a short Question and Answer session after the talks. **M-LH**

– PPG EVENT –
6.00 pm, Thursday 19 January
"HEARING LOSS"
Causes, symptoms,
treatments, hearing aids

**SPEAKERS LED BY JULIE WILKINS,
MANAGER OF AUDIOLGY SERVICES,
CHARING CROSS HOSPITAL**
Followed by a Question and
Answer Session

Light refreshments from 5.30 pm
Group Room VMC,
29 Upper Tachbrook Street

Contact Victoria MC and Lees Place MC by e-mail: CLCCG.VMC@nhs.net
Contact the Patient Participation Group by e-mail (on PPG matters only.
Not to be used for clinical or practice matters) vmcpgg@live.co.uk



Patient Participation Group

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Winter 2016/17



news

Dear VMC and Lees Place Patients,

Another year has passed and there is little evidence of respite for an NHS in crisis, and – whatever the excuse – extreme pressure on public health and social care services remains the reality. That's all the more reason why you should support the Patient Participation Group.

From January 2017 I will be the VMC's PPG representative on the User Panel of the Central London Clinical Commissioning Group (CLCCG). The User Panel has an independent voice in helping to shape local NHS services, and can make a real difference when it comes to responding to patients' needs.

The more that patients get involved in NHS decision making the better, which is why your PPG is such an important link in the chain.

If you are not already on the VMC PPG mailing list, please e-mail me on vmgppg@live.co.uk with your name, and you will be kept up to date with PPG events as well as news about changes to the practice's clinics and services, and also the nationwide initiatives taken by the National Association for Patient Participation (N.A.P.P.).

It's not all bad news, and we are fortunate to be part of a practice that

supports our efforts. But if we want the NHS to deliver the improvements in the quality of care and the outcomes from treatment that we yearn for, then we need all the patient support and energy that we can muster.

The next PPG event, 'Hearing Loss' will take place at VMC on Thursday **19 January** – see back page for details. Everyone is welcome. Meanwhile, I send seasonal greetings to all.

Mary Luisa Hartley
Chair, VMC PPG

CHRISTMAS MEET AND GREET

On Saturday **17 December** VMC will be holding a 'behind the scenes' tour of the practice from 10.30-11.30 for new and existing patients who are interested in finding out what goes on behind the closed doors, followed by a welcome mince-pie and hot drink in the group room. Please come along – and assemble in the group room.



STAFF CHANGES

We welcome Dr Aderonke Akinmade, who will be joining the VMC team in January. Meanwhile Dr Lisa Burton's appointment has been confirmed. A new practice nurse, Oksana Vildanova, has also started work.

We are sorry that Dr Sarah Green will be leaving at the end of February to relocate with her husband to Guildford, and also in March 2017 Dr Clare McCamley and nurse Meena Nazari are expecting babies so they will both be on maternity leave. We will be recruiting doctors and nurses to cover their workload.

CLINICS and SERVICES

FLU IMMUNISATION

There was a good take-up at the autumn walk-in flu clinics, and it is still not too late to have this year's flu vaccination.

If you are a patient aged 65 and over or whose medical condition puts you at risk from flu please phone VMC on 020 7834 2298 or Lees Place on 020 7036 6060 and make an appointment as soon as possible.

Also, all children aged 2, 3 and 4 years old are entitled to have a flu immunisation – no needles for them, it is administered by a nasal spray.

WALK-IN BLOOD TESTS

Patients will be pleased to know that, in response to patient demand, VMC is now able to provide a walk-in phlebotomy service from Monday to Friday from 8.00 am to 1.00 pm. The service at Lees Place remains the same, with appointments being made with the nurse in advance.

CLINICS and SERVICES

HIV TESTS – BETTER TO KNOW

HIV is now a treatable medical condition and the majority of those living with the virus remain fit and well on treatment. Despite this, a significant number of people in the UK, especially in London, are unaware of their HIV infection and remain at risk to their own health and of unwittingly passing the virus on to others. Late diagnosis of HIV makes treatment more difficult and less effective.

We are offering ALL new and existing patients the chance to be screened for HIV at the practice. Just pick up a blue card and hand it to reception who will print a form and add you to the list for blood tests that morning. You won't have to answer any questions or enter into any discussions you don't want to, although you are welcome to ask as many questions as you like. We will let you know how and when to get your results in complete confidence, and we will help you with advice on future testing or referral if required. Surely it's better to know? Don't hesitate, do take up the offer of a free HIV test.

EXERCISE CLASSES FOR THE OVER-SIXTIES

Unfortunately it has not been possible to find funding for these very popular classes. The Westminster Physiotherapy and Pilates Centre (WPPC) is still able to provide one class for VMC patients on Monday mornings on a donation basis. If this proves popular, it may be possible to offer another class on Wednesdays. Keep a look out for up-to-date timings and dates, and thank you to WPPC.

ANTIBIOTIC AWARENESS

Antibiotics (also known as antibacterials) are sometimes prescribed to prevent types of **bacterial infection**. They work by killing bacteria or preventing them from reproducing and spreading. Many mild bacterial infections can be cleared up by your body's natural immune system without the use of antibiotics. It is important not to be in a hurry to take antibiotics because bacteria can adapt, and overuse makes them less effective, leaving the body vulnerable to strains of antibiotic resistant superbugs. Antibiotic resistance is one of the most significant threats to patient safety in Europe.

Although viruses can cause similar symptoms to bacterial infections such as a blocked or runny nose, coughing, sneezing, fever, aching and fatigue, antibiotics are not effective against **viral infections** such as the common cold, flu, most coughs and sore throats. The best remedy for a mild viral infection is to stay at home, keep warm and drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration. Antibiotics are not the answer.

TOILETS



VMC continues to suffer from vandalism of the patients' toilets caused by persons yet to be identified. The situation is intolerable and the practice gives notice of its intention to take whatever action is necessary to deter the culprits.



My name is **Dr Lynn Chukuezi**. I joined VMC in February 2016 as a salaried GP after relocating back to London.

I am originally from Central London and am so glad to be back. After graduating from Leicester University, I subsequently qualified as a GP in 2013 and worked in large practices in Leicester and Loughborough.

Having returned home after fifteen years in Leicestershire in order to be close to my family, it feels just like I never left.

I will soon become the Respiratory Lead in the practice, which will involve improving the care of patients with lung conditions such as asthma and COPD (Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and ensuring that those at risk receive their annual flu jabs.

I have had a warm welcome not only from the VMC team but also from the many patients whom I have had the pleasure of meeting. I hope to meet more of you soon.

Lynn Chukuezi