



WRSG Newsletter

WOLVERHAMPTON RHEUMATOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP

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CARING IS SHARING

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Reminder - Subscriptions

£5

The WRSG yearly subscriptions were due in June. Committee agreed to keep the charge at £5 per person and £8 per couple. If you became a member of the WRSG in 2007 your subscriptions are not due until June 2008. Remittance advice slips were enclosed with the June newsletter. Thank you to members who have paid.

The WRSG database will be amended at the end of August with only members who have paid receiving the September newsletter.

Cheques should be made payable to the WRSG and sent direct to our Treasurer:

WRSG Annual General Meeting

The WRSG AGM is on the evening of the 10th September at the Holly Bush Inn, 494 Penn Road, Penn Wolverhampton at 7.00 for 7.30 p.m.

Madam Mayor, Cllr. Trudy Bowen and Dr. Paul Newton have agreed to attend as guest speakers and we hope that Dr. Ali will also speak. We will be providing a buffet and there is no charge for the event. The AGM will close at approximately 9.45 p.m. The purpose of the AGM is to elect/re-elect the committee and to receive the Annual Accounts and the Chair/Secretary's report. Invitations are enclosed with this newsletter. Due to the cost of the buffet places will be limited and therefore will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Reply slips should be returned to me no later than 25th August please.

Carver Wolverhampton City Marathon

I am attending the monthly Marathon committee meetings. We are lucky in that we will receive funding from this year's event together with the sponsorship money raised by Chris Dodd for his Half Marathon. We asked you to support our Christmas raffle in 2005 and to sponsor Andy Geeson and his family in the Marathon Cycle Ride in 2006. We sent out the sponsor forms for Chris Dodd this year. This is purely voluntary and we think it is better than putting up the WRSG subscriptions to raise our funds. The event is on Sunday 2nd September. We will also have a table in West Park to advertise the group with a collecting tin! Iris Kruczek with the help of Reg Jones has kindly agreed to do a Tombola stall at the event. If you have any prizes please give me a ring and I will pick them up.

Dorothy

Reminder - West Midland Safari Park

Sheila Fardoe is organising a trip to the West Midland Safari Park on Friday 10th August. We leave Falkland Street Coach Station at 9.30 a.m. and leave the Safari Park at approximately 4.00p.m

The charge is £10.00 per adult which includes the coach fare and entry and £5 per child for entry with the WRSB paying the coach fare for the children.

Wrist bands for the rides and food on the day will have to be provided by members themselves as usual.

To book places ring Sheila between 4.30 and 7.00 p.m. only please.

Droitwich Spar Brine Baths

We haven't had a big enough response to make this outing financially viable.

Apologies to the few who registered an interest

Family matters

One of our members said she missed me writing about Jessica and Jack. I said that when they were little they liked to be "famous" but now they are older they are more sensitive and I would have to be careful what I write.

However they do still make me smile.

I had intended to go to Bushbury Crematorium to clean the plaques on Father's Day but the weather on the previous Friday was atrocious and I was frightened of slipping.

The following weekend instead of handing the children back at their house I asked Greg if he would meet me at the Crematorium and clean the plaques for me. We arranged to meet there on the Saturday morning.

When Ann dropped the children off on the Friday night to sleepover Jack said "Nan we are going to clean the cemetery tomorrow then. Why are we doing it?" I said "We are doing Grandad Don's and my Mom and Dad's and Don's Mom and Dad's plaques." "Oh," he said, "I thought we had to clean them all!"

What a gigantic task that would be!

On the same subject Don died sixteen years ago. Jessica is eleven and a half and Jack is ten. Don is a photograph on the wall as far as they are concerned but they are very inquisitive about him which I think is rather nice.

A few weeks ago when I picked them up from school we were in the car when Jessica said "I have been in contact with Grandad Don" I felt a little apprehensive and I said "How did you manage that" She said "I was at my friend's house and we sat holding hands in a circle with our toes touching. I won the toss of a coin and I could decide who we would contact and I chose Grandad Don."

Now I was feeling uneasy but I said "What did he say" Jessica said "Oh Nan, it wasn't like that. I asked him to give me a sign and a car went past"

No worries about that then!

They are at an age when they are asking questions all the time about health and life and death. Jessica said she didn't want me to die and that when I died she would want to die too. I thought that was awful and I said she mustn't think like that. She must think "I didn't want my Nan to die but she had a happy life." I then said I would want them to get married and have children and grandchildren of their own and that they must remember that.

We don't feel any older inside but to our grandchildren I think we look very old!

Thank you to the people who have contacted me to say how much they enjoyed the red marbles story. Several said it made them cry!

Well if I am bringing a tear to your eye I would like it to be a tear of laughter not sadness so I think I had better change the subject.

I will go on the Internet and see if I can find something funny to write about on the next page.

Dorothy

At the Supermarket

A young man was walking through a supermarket to pick up a few things when he noticed an old lady following him around. Thinking nothing of it, he ignored her and continued on.

Finally he went to the check-out but she got in front of him. "Pardon me," she said, "I'm sorry if my staring at you has made you feel uncomfortable. It's just that you look just like my son, who I haven't seen in a long time." "That's a shame," replied the young man "Is there anything I can do for you?" "Yes," she said, "As I'm leaving, can you say 'Good bye, Mother! It would make me feel so much better.'" "Sure," answered the young man. So, when the old woman was leaving, he called out, "Goodbye, Mother!"

As he stepped up to the check-out counter, he saw that his bill was £55 "How can that be?" he asked, "I only purchased a few things!" The clerk replied, "Your mother said that you would pay for hers."

During a Messy Divorce

A couple in the middle of a messy divorce case find themselves in court battling over custody of little Johnny, their only child. In order to make a fair decision over the boy's future, the Judge takes Johnny into his private chambers so that he can find out which of the parents the boy would prefer to live with. "Well, Johnny" says the Judge, "Would you like to live with your Mother?" "No" replied Johnny, "she hits me all the time" "Well then," the Judge continues, "Would you like to live your Father?" "No" replied Johnny again, "He hits me all the time too!" The Judge looks exasperated and says to the boy "Well Johnny, who would you like to live with?" "I'd like to live with Watford Football Club" the boy replied quickly.

"Why on earth would you want to live with the Watford Football Club?" replied the now extremely puzzled Judge. "Well" replied Johnny, "They never beat anyone"

Inheritance Blues

A man in a bar sees a friend at a table, drinking by himself. Approaching the friend he comments, "You look terrible. What's the problem?" "My mother died in August," his friend replied, "and left me £25,000. Then in September my father died, leaving me £90,000."

"Losing both parents in two months no wonder you're depressed."

"And last month my aunt died, and left me £15,000." His friend continued.

"Three close family members lost in three months? How sad"

"Then this month," concluded, the friend, "absolutely nothing!"

The Burst Pipe

A pipe burst in a doctor's house. He called a plumber. The plumber arrived, unpacked his tools, did mysterious plumber-type things for a while, and handed the doctor a bill for £300. The doctor exclaimed, "This is ridiculous! I don't even make that much as a doctor!" The plumber waited for him to finish and quietly said, "Neither did I when I was a doctor."

The following are quotes are from the Random Acts of kindness Foundation

"Kind hearts are the gardens,
Kind thoughts are the roots,
Kind words are the flowers,
Kind deeds are the fruits.

Take care of your garden
And keep out the weeds,
Fill it with sunshine
Kind words and kind deeds."

Author: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"It really is much easier to help people and causes than what most people seem to think. You just go out and take that first step and things start falling in place. If they don't, you change direction, but you never pull over and park!"

Author: Jason Crowe, founder (at age 11) of The Cello Cries On, Inc.

New Hospital Project Board User Group

I represent the Primary Care Trust Patients Forum on the above group. We are meeting once a month to progress towards an Outline Business Case for the new hospital. We have also met for an option appraisal to choose the best hospital for future development. Recommendation:-

“Following the formal options appraisal exercise. The Evaluation Team recommends that Option B – Emergency Portal and Medical and Surgical Beds, is taken forward for consideration as the preferred option from a non-financial perspective in the development of the Trust’s Outline Business Case for the provision of acute hospital services.”

At the last meeting I suggested that the traffic be directed the other way round the hospital because at the moment everyone who gets off the bus has to cross the busy road. This has worried me since the Eye Infirmary moved to the New Cross site earlier in the year.

Liz had also pointed out to me that it was a nightmare to get patients from Accident and Emergency to the Emergency Assessment Unit which is at the opposite end of that long uphill corridor and I was able to make that point at the meeting. If you have any ideas which would be of benefit to patients and staff when the new hospital is being built please let me know while I have the opportunity to pass them on.

Interview

At the end of June I had an invitation, again to represent the PCT Patients Forum, at an interview with Malte Gerhold. Malte is a member of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit's Health Team. Katy Harris who is co-ordinating the 18 Week Programme Priority Review for the Department of Health 18 Weeks Team and Ros Gray who is a member of the Intensive Support Team for 18 weeks.

The purpose of the thirty minute interview was to gain my views on the 18 week waiting list targets and many other aspects of the NHS.

They made a lot of notes and I did think they were listening to me as a patient.

Duncan's Story

Following a patient's journey

NHS Connecting for Health's Director General Richard Granger, the Chief Clinical Officer Michael Thick and other senior staff joined voluntary sector representatives in April 2007 to follow a patient's journey, using some of the technological advances made possible by the National Programme for IT.

This is Duncan's story:

Duncan McNeill, a 60 year-old from Yorkshire, has just lost his wife. He is visited by a social worker for an assessment that is intended to be shared with local health workers. He mentions some worrying symptoms that they agree need to be discussed with his GP.

The GP refers him to a hospital. Duncan chooses a hospital in London to be near his daughter and is given an appointment there and then.

The consultant in London is able to call up previous scans and x-rays to help make a correct diagnosis and avoid being led in wrong directions.

On 17 April 2007, 50 senior people from the voluntary sector were invited by NHS Connecting for Health to follow Duncan on his journey from social worker to GP to consultant, with a real patient record, a live electronic booking, and real digital x-rays and scans.

The attendees were from groups representing people with a range of perspectives on electronic health records: older and younger people, those with physical and learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, and those from ethnic minority communities.

Following the demonstration, guests then had the chance to question NHS Connecting for Health's Director General Richard Granger, the Chief Clinical Officer Michael Thick, and other senior staff.

The lively session covered, among other things, the role of the voluntary sector in sharing patient information, patient consent and confidentiality, and the working of Choose and Book - the electronic booking system.

The evening ended with a reception hosted by Minister of State Lord Hunt and people were able to see and feel the technology of the future – indestructible notebook-sized computers, flat keyboards for easy cleaning and systems for patients to monitor themselves at home.

There was also a demonstration of the Summary Care Record, showing how various choices patients made either enabled or limited the flow of information. NHS Connecting for Health's National Patient Lead Marlene Winfield said afterwards: "We work closely with a number of voluntary sector groups. It is important for them to be able to see the systems that are already up and running and what will be coming in the near future. "It was also an excellent opportunity for our most senior staff to hear the candid views of representatives of the end users of our products and services. Issues raised at the meeting are being followed up with our National Voluntary Sector Advisory Group."

Choose and Book

NHS Connecting for Health is delighted to announce the appointment of Dr Stephen Miller as Medical Director for the national Choose and Book programme. Dr Miller will be working with the national team, clinicians and front-line NHS staff to make Choose and Book the everyday method for referring patients. He brings a wealth of expertise in both the primary and acute sectors and is an existing Choose and Book user.

He said: "I believe that there is a great and exciting future for Choose and Book in helping to integrate and deliver many of the new IT-based solutions for improved health care in the NHS.

"As a working GP, I see the benefits of Choose and Book on a daily basis, both for me and for my patients."

Dr Miller has been a practising GP for over 12 years and has been using Choose and Book in his surgery for the last two.

He was the driving force behind local clinical engagement in Choose and Book and helped South East London rapidly become one of the highest users of the service nationally.

He added: "I am very excited at having been appointed to the post of national Medical Director. I want to see Choose and Book become the everyday referral method across the NHS and a widely used tool which helps deliver vital NHS reform, such as 18 weeks and Practice Based Commissioning.

"Choose and Book works very well for a lot of people a lot of the time - this includes GPs, consultants and patients. I am keen to listen to those who are using the system and especially those who are not and to working with the national team, to help make Choose and Book work well for everyone - all of the time."

Grossman hits out over NHS food

Loyd Grossman, once drafted in to revamp NHS menus, has accused ministers of failing to take hospital patients' nutrition seriously. The broadcaster, famous for Masterchef, said a long line of health ministers had failed to give sufficient political commitment to improving NHS food. Speaking to Nursing Standard magazine, he also accused civil servants of lacking imagination. The Department of Health said hospital food had improved greatly.

Mr Grossman was asked to head the government's Better Hospital Food Programme seven years ago. The £40 million initiative was launched in 2001 and ran for five years. However, the project failed to capture the imagination.

Nurses in Lancashire described the new menus as "slop" months after they were introduced, and the chairman of the Hospital Caterers Association said they were too expensive.

Missed opportunity

Mr Grossman told Nursing Standard: "It was a hugely missed opportunity. I found there was little political commitment to improve hospital food.

"In the five years I was involved I reported to five different ministers.

"With a ministerial turnaround like that, it is difficult to make sure the political will to take hospital food seriously exists."

Mr Grossman said his work with the NHS had left him reluctant to get involved in similar projects without a guarantee that they would be taken seriously.

He stressed he was convinced that good nutrition was vital to aid the recovery and healing process.

"Ideally I would like to see hospitals preparing fresh food in their own kitchens. But the most important thing is food quality.

"Hospital catering is a complex issue and a series of small, unspectacular steps would create lasting value.

"But that is not sufficiently headline-grabbing and therefore it fell down the agenda."

Mr Grossman said the NHS would do better to centralise power when purchasing food rather than delegating the task down to local level.

Standards

This would enable it to use its influence not only to secure a good deal for patients, but also to help support suppliers.

A Healthcare Commission survey of inpatients carried out in 2006 found levels of patient satisfaction with hospital food had not risen since the previous survey four years earlier.

But Neil Watson-Jones, chairman of the Hospital Caterers Association, said the project had helped to raise standards of hospital food, in part by raising the profile of the issue, and by increasing awareness of the importance of good nutrition.

A Department of Health spokesperson said: "Hospital food has improved greatly over the past few years.

"There are some excellent menus around but we recognise that more needs to be done."

Story from BBC NEWS:

Published: 26/06/20.07

Surgeon appointed as minister

Prime Minister Gordon Brown has appointed a practising surgeon as a minister at the Department of Health. Professor Sir Ara Darzi, who is charged with improving patient care, has been promoted from his previous role as National Advisor on surgery.

When he took over as prime minister, Mr Brown said he planned a broad-based government of "all the talents".

But the Conservatives have criticised the appointment, accusing Sir Ara of having a poor record of supporting access to services for patients and rubber-stamping the demands of the Department of Health.

In a report published earlier this year Sir Ara said 80% of operations should be carried out on patients in their local area, with the remaining complex cases undertaken at specialist centres by highly skilled surgeons. Ministers have already embarked on a policy of reconfiguring services along these lines - leading to controversial decisions about individual NHS units which have been bitterly opposed by critics. Sir Ara will combine his ministerial duties with his research and clinical commitments, including the supervision of students. Sir Ara, 47, said: "It is a great honour and privilege to be asked by the Prime Minister to continue that work for patients across the country. "I will be working closely with Alan Johnson to map out the next steps of the reform agenda that has achieved so much in the last 10 years. But we can do better."

Frontline experience

He said he would draw on his experience from the frontline to fulfil his new responsibilities.

"I am not a politician by profession. My working life has, is and will continue to be centred on patient care."

Sir Ara is internationally respected for his innovative work in the advancement of minimal invasive surgery and in the development and use of allied technologies including surgical robots and image-guided surgery.

Dr Jonathan Fielden, chair of the BMA's consultants' committee, said: "Having a focus on improving patient care is a positive step forward.

"We will be looking forward to him listening to our concerns and working closely with him to ensure that the concerns of the profession and the public are utilised to improve patient care."

Mr Bernard Ribeiro, President of the Royal College of Surgeons, said: "I am delighted that a practising surgeon, who deals with patients on a regular basis, has decided to take such a high position.

"It is an opportunity for government to engage directly with the profession."

The prime minister's spokesman said "Professor Darzi would work Monday to Thursday as a minister - being paid for three days - and continue to work as an NHS surgeon, unpaid, on Fridays"

Any income from his international private practice will be paid direct to Imperial College to fund research, the spokesman said.

Story from BBC NEWS:

Published: 29/06/2007

Story about an Early Morning Drunk

Rodney and his wife Wilma are awakened at 3 o' clock early one Saturday morning by a loud pounding on the door. Rodney gets up and goes to the door where he sees a drunken stranger, standing in the pouring rain. 'Give us a push' says the swaying stranger. 'Not a chance', says the husband, 'It is three o' clock in the morning.' He slams the door and returns to bed. 'Who was that?' asked his wife. 'Just some drunken guy asking for a push', he answers. 'Did you help him?' Wilma asks. 'No. I did not. It is three o' clock in the morning and it is pouring with rain outside.

His wife said, 'Don't you remember about three months ago when we broke down and those two guys helped us? I think you should help him, and you should be ashamed of yourself. Rodney does as he is told, gets dressed and goes out into the pouring rain. He calls out into the dark, 'Hello! Are you still there? 'Yes', comes back the answer.

'Do you still need a push?' calls out Rodney. 'Yes. Please.' comes the reply from the Darkness.

'Where are you?' asks Rodney.

'Over here on the swing', replies the drunk.

Usha Ghai has asked me to print the following poem for you

My daughter

My little, tiny sweet daughter, She was worried of her height
Which is shorter then her other brothers and sister,
My sweet caring daughter, very intelligent and bright,
Broken my heart, when she went, out of my sight,
I was shocked, shouting in depression and crying,
She was staring, stubborn & I think,
She already had made her mind,
I lost my precious & valuables, as she left me alone,
I was begging & touching her feet, to stay, but she had gone,
The door was still open, no body was there,
All over now, don't cry, sit down,
My husband, pulled me a chair,
My husband hold my shoulders, as he was also crying,
Giving me support and sympathy, very hard he was trying,
My tears were rolling on my cheeks; I was feeling very dizzy,
After so much love and comfort from my husband,
Forget my own flesh & blood, it is not easy,
She was my best friend, grandma & only carer,
My heart is still crying, ears are waiting to listen her,
Empty room still there, waiting for her,
Computer, bed, wardrobe are still there, need only owner,

Challenging Arthritis Course

The Challenging Arthritis course which was booked for 22nd October at Bantock House, Wolverhampton has been cancelled.

Unfortunately Liz was taken ill on holiday in Tenerife at the end of June. Liz is now back home and making a steady recovery but we think she needs time to rest. The courses are very time consuming when you take into consideration the recruiting, administration, presentation and evaluation.

Obituary

It is with much sadness that I have to announce the death at the beginning of July of our committee member, Anne Green. Anne had been a member of the WRSG for many years and is sadly missed. The family have asked for donations in memory of Anne for the WRSG.

I Did My Best

I was watching Heartbeat the other Sunday when the phone rang. It was Jack. "Do you know which countries Hitler invaded and which he didn't because I am doing a school project?" he asked. "Well he invaded Poland first and that is why we went to war with him" I replied. "He also invaded Russia but it was the weather that beat him then rather than the army" I was in full flow by now. "He invaded Austria, France, Denmark and Holland" I wasn't sure about that but I thought I was doing quite well.

"What about Norway and Sweden" he said "I said I didn't know. "Switzerland remained neutral" I said "and he didn't invade us." "Well he bombed us" he said, "Yes but invade means he landed and the German troops didn't land here" I replied.

Then he got to me. "You are not very good at this are you?" he said. "Well ring your Grandad then" I said "He was in the RAF." "O.k I will, see you on Thursday. Bye and off he went. One can only do ones best can't one! It was much simpler when we used to play charades and I spy with my little eye.

Co-proxamol

As I said previously I am still able to get my co-proxamol but either I have become very weak or the packaging has changed. I am having difficulty pressing them out of the foil and instead of accidentally overdosing on them I am more likely to die of exhaustion trying to get at them.

Hydrotherapy

I am continuing to make a nuisance of myself regarding the reinstatement of hydrotherapy.

This is the latest reply to my e-mails so don't give up!

"We are interviewing the lifeguards in the morning, (17th July) I have two Physios already recruited, we should be ready to start as soon as the employment checks are completed on the lifeguards hopefully the beginning of September."

Calorie-burning activities

Proper weight control cannot be attained by dieting alone; however, many people who are engaged in sedentary occupations do not realize that calories can be burned by the hundreds by engaging in strenuous activities that do not require much (or any) physical exercise.

Here's the guide to calorie-burning activities and the number of calories per hour they consume.

Beating around the bush	75
Jumping to conclusions	100
Climbing the walls	150
Swallowing your pride.	50
Passing the buck	25
Pushing your luck.	250
Making mountains out of molehills.	500
Hitting the nail on the head50
Bending over backwards75
Running around in circles.	350
Climbing the ladder of success	650

Disclaimer:

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