Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the July Edition of GP Round Up. Thank you to all GPs who attended the GP Consultant Workshop on 12th July. At the end of the afternoon the feedback was very positive with a request for another session in six month’s time. I jointly chaired a 'niggles' session and I will be feeding back on the actions from this in next month’s edition of GP Round Up.

The GP Round Up email newsletter is sent out to Practice Managers in the local area - please can you forward it on to all your colleagues in your practice or surgery. You can also download the PDF version and pin it to a Staff Noticeboard if this would help everyone to see it.
The Pathology Team have compiled a list of recent and frequently asked questions relating to clinical and operational pathology issues. The questions & answers are listed below; the topics cover the monitoring of: DMARD drugs, patients on statin and diabetes and there is also information on /Gonococcus testing and requesting on ICE.

1. **When monitoring DMARD drugs do I need to do a full, 5 test, LFT every time or can I just request ALT?**

   We have checked with the rheumatology team. For routine monitoring in stable patients the ALT alone will suffice. This has now been included as a button on the relevant ICE screen.

   If ALT is raised we would suggest asking for the full LFT to be added. Biochemistry generally have specimens in store for 7 days after collection.

2. **What about creatinine and CK in patients on statin?**

   Similarly the single tests are available and you do not need to measure the full (4 test) U&E.

3. **Lipids in diabetes monitoring. Is fasting necessary?**

   This is rather a matter of balance between the formal NICE guidance and practicality. Triglyceride measurements on non-fasting samples are not valid.

   NICE Guideline 87 recommends fasting lipids annually. The local approach of many of your colleagues is risk based. The most important lipid risk factor is HDL followed by triglycerides. HDL is valid in a non-fasting sample (although if the triglyceride is high we may not be able to measure it because of interference.

   We would suggest a full fasting profile in all at diagnosis and, if not elevated, then every 2-3 years. Monitor full profile in fasting samples in patients with high trigs.

   The “Non-fasting lipid profile” is now on the DM monitoring ICE screen.

4. **Urine protein:creatinine ratio. Are GP colleagues measuring them in simple “hypertension”?**

   Urine Albumin:creatinine ratios (UACR) and Protein:creatinine ratios (UPCR) used to be simple. We did albumin on diabetics to monitor for onset of microvascular disease and protein in renal failure. The 2012 National Diabetes Audit and the CKD3 with and with proteinuria guidelines made things more complex.
We currently measure around 2000 a month. In a recent count the reasons for request were (note some may have two reasons):

- DM: 60%
- CKD: 48%
- Hypertension: 8%
- Unknown: 1%

5. **How does the introduction of dual Chlamydia/Gonococcus testing affect the Chlamydia screening programme?**

The Chlamydia screening programme is not funded or configured at the current time to include gonococcus testing. Samples submitted under the programme will continue to be tested only for Chlamydia. For dual testing for STI, a direct access request has to be made. In that situation both tests can be done on the same sample.

6. **ICE request forms.**

Please make sure your phlebotomy staff write the date and time of collection on the request form and, in particular, tick the “Fasting” box when they have checked that a patient has been fasting for their test.

7. **Progress with ICE:**

We are now receiving more than 80% of direct access requests through ICE. Note that once the ICE form has been printed at your surgery it is difficult to add on extra tests until after the request has been booked in at RBH. Hand-written notes to us on ICE forms will not to be seen.

8. **Lab Tests on Line: Now an phone app and in more languages.**

Many of you will be familiar with this UK professional body supported web site which describes pathology tests for patients and health professionals. [http://www.labtestsonline.org.uk/](http://www.labtestsonline.org.uk/)

It is now available as a free mobile phone app for iPhone/iPad and Android. There are also now versions in several eastern European languages: Polish, Rumanian, Hungarian.

If you have any further questions please contact Geoff Lester, Clinical Director or Geoff Pinney, Laboratory Manager, Department of Pathology Royal Berkshire Hospital.
New Entrant TB Screening Programme

We request that GPs and Health Visitors please encourage patients to attend for new entrant TB screening.

Screening is voluntary but to be encouraged as pre-departure checks do not detect latent TB and the risk of activation of latent TB is most high in the early years after exposure. The Health Control Unit at Heathrow airport provides us with information to enable us to contact high risk people i.e. those who arrive to stay in the UK for longer than 6 months and who originate from countries where there is a high incidence of TB.

A patient information leaflet and a list of at risk countries can be downloaded as a separate attachment.

Our service is free and confidential and does not affect a person’s right to be in the UK. Screening Clinics are held at RBH and WBCH; investigations vary depending on age and symptoms:

- Discussion of symptoms of active TB
- Mantoux skin test for under 16 years
- IGRA blood test for 16-35 years and possible chest x-ray
- Chest x-ray for over 35 years
- Testing also offered for blood borne viruses-HIV-Hep B and C

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact one of our TB Nurses by telephoning: Tracey Langham 0118 322 6882, Anita Clear 0118 322 8266 or Kay Perry 0118 322 8266.

Surgical High Dependency Unit Opens

You are probably aware of studies that recommend the provision of critical care in the immediate 24–48 hours after high risk surgery to improve outcomes and give patients a better chance of recovery?

Earlier this month the Royal Berkshire Hospital opened a new surgical High Dependency Unit (HDU) on Heygroves Ward with eight new surgical HDU beds, bring our total number of critical care beds in the Trust to 19.

The surgical HDU will be overseen by new Matron Helen Challand, sisters Jenny Davis and Julie Boxley and the ICU consultants with close input from the surgical team. While the ward has been closed many of the nursing team has been completing their ICU training.
How to Raise a Query or Concern

We welcome feedback from GPs and Practice Managers, so please let us know if you experience any problems with our services. You can get in touch via email to gphelp@royalberkshire.nhs.uk or by using our simple web form that can be found on the Trust website: http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/gps/queryform.aspx?theme=gp.

Alternatively you can contact our GP Liaison Manager directly by email to: caroline.hillman@royalberkshire.nhs.uk, or telephone 0118 322 5313.

If you wish to send us patient identifiable information with your concern please email to: gp Liaison.rbf@nhs.net.

Our Patient Advice and Liaison Team (PALS) focus on providing support and on the spot help to patients, relatives and carers and can be contacted via talktous@royalberkshire.nhs.uk. The PALS Team also investigate serious patient complaints.

Directories of Services by Site

Please note that we are now publishing Directories of Services for each of the following sites on our website. www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/gps/directory_of_services.aspx

- Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading
- Townlands Community Hospital, Henley
- West Berks Community Hospital, Newbury
- Royal Berkshire Bracknell Clinic, Bracknell

For each site we list by specialty the outpatient clinics provided, with details of the consultant, frequency of clinic and more details on conditions seen.

Initial feedback from GPs on these has been very positive. We hope you will all find them useful. Please let us know if you have any feedback on them.

Consultant Directory & Telephone List

To search our consultant directory by name or speciality please use this link:

To download the latest Consultant telephone list updated May 2013 please download the separate attachment.

Previous Issues

Please send an email to gphelp@royalberkshire.nhs.uk if you’d like a copy of any previous issue. They have been produced monthly since March 2010. They are also available on the GP section of the Trust website.

http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/gps/gp_information/gp_newsletter.aspx