

PRESS RELEASE

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ROUND THE CLOCK A&E CANCER DOCTORS REVOLUTIONISE TREATMENT FOR PATIENTS

HAVING ON-SITE cancer consultants in hospitals with Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments improves diagnosis and treatment of patients and reduces their hospital stay, according to data presented at the National Cancer Research Institute Cancer Conference in Liverpool, today (Wednesday).

New cancer patients admitted through A&E usually have advanced disease, with late-stage symptoms, so not having access to the best cancer experts from the start can cause confusion around diagnosis and treatment.

To address this, The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust developed a network of 'Acute Oncology'* teams to provide a Monday-to-Friday emergency cancer service in all hospitals with A&E departments in the Merseyside and Cheshire cancer network, to see if this would improve treatment for patients admitted through A&E.

The service aimed to improve assessment of people who had not yet been diagnosed with cancer; cancer patients admitted because of treatment side effects; and cancer patients with disease complications.

Between April 2012 and April 2013, 787 cancer patients were admitted as an emergency to Southport and Ormskirk hospital trust, either through the A&E Department, or through the Medical Admissions Unit.

Of these, 96 per cent were seen within 24 hours by the Acute Oncology Team and the remaining four per cent were seen within 48 hours. Previously these patients would not have been seen at all by oncology consultants.

The results showed that 76 per cent of the 787 A&E patients received a major benefit of being seen by oncology specialists when previously no such service existed. These benefits included the acute team being able to advise medical teams more quickly and effectively on appropriate investigations for new cancer patients. And for people with existing cancer the team could provide more effective management of severe chemotherapy or radiotherapy side effects. These improvements combined to decrease the length of stay in hospital to an average of 8.7 days compared with the previous average stay of 12.1 days, across the network. The service was also able to care for some patients in A&E or day units enabling patients to be discharged and avoiding unnecessary admission.

A support service also provided information on cancer treatment to patients and their families – enabling earlier discharge compared with the previous system.

Dr Helen Neville-Webbe, study author, Consultant at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre and Acute Oncology Consultant at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital, said: "Incorporating cancer consultants and cancer nurse specialists into the acute

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medical services of A&E and Acute Medical Admissions of a hospital means better care for cancer patients. Being able to see a specialist straight away has ensured patients receive better management of side effects of cancer treatment, and for those admitted with advanced disease, we can ensure patients are appropriately managed, whilst providing psychological support and information”

There was no budget for the new service and cost savings were made from reduced bed costs because of the reduced length of stay in hospital due to the improved patient pathway.

Dr Neville-Webbe added: “This new approach to acute cancer care provides cost savings whilst providing high quality care to cancer patients, making it a win-win for patients and the NHS.”

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Notes to editors

About The Clatterbridge cancer centre NHS Foundation Trust

The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre is one of the largest, networked cancer centres in the UK, employing 860 specialists and treating 28,000 patients each year.

The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre is one of the UK’s leading providers of non-surgical oncology treatments including pioneering chemotherapy, radiotherapy and proton therapy, combining its world-class clinical services, research and academic excellence, it provides the highest quality, specialist cancer diagnosis and care for more than 2.3million residents in Merseyside, Cheshire, North Wales, the Isle of Man and parts of Lancashire as well as national and international cancer patients.

In August 2012, The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre was rated in the top 20 per cent of organisations in the country for overall treatment and care, according to the latest National Cancer Patient Experience Survey results.

About the NCRI Cancer Conference

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference is the UK’s major forum for showcasing the best British and international cancer research. The Conference offers unique opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge by bringing together world-leading experts from all cancer research disciplines. The ninth annual NCRI Cancer Conference is taking place from 3–6 November 2013 at the BT Convention Centre in Liverpool. Roche is the principal sponsor of the 2013 NCRI Cancer Conference.

For more information visit conference.ncri.org.uk

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About the NCRI

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) was established in 2001. It is a UK-wide partnership between the government, charity and industry which promotes cooperation in cancer research.

NCRI members are: the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); Association for International Cancer Research; Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; Children with Cancer UK; Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie Cancer Care; Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (Research & Development Office); Prostate Cancer UK; Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Government Health Directorates (Chief Scientist Office); Tenovus; Welsh Government (National Institute for Social Care and Health Research); The Wellcome Trust; and Yorkshire Cancer Research.

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