

PPG MINUTES WAPPING GROUP PRACTICE

THURSDAY 9TH NOVEMBER 2023

PRESENT:

Dr M Farrelly - Senior Practice Partner
Nayib Ahmed - Practice Manager
Vernon Morgan – Chair
Dr Michael James – Guest Speaker
Anne Palmer
Jerome Cotter
Daniel Kruger
Beverley Saunders
Jetinder Lali
Hugh Maloney
Shai Davies
Angela Abersinghe
Caroline Crowley
Sally Unwin – Secretary

APOLOGIES:

Barbara Mead
Kit Chan
Mike Nulty
Mike Smith

Before the meeting began, our attention was drawn to graffiti daubed on a local tree and also at Spirit Quay, this had been reported as a Hate Crime under CAD Ref: 42651.

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION: The Chairman opened the meeting welcoming both our guest speaker, Dr Michael James, Clinical Research Fellow in Hepatology at Queen Mary, University of London and our new Practice Manager: Mr. Nayib Ahmed.

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed. Chairman drew our attention to the fact that our Minutes are now being uploaded and have been made more accessible for all patients via the Internet. They exist as a historical archive. He also mentioned how he is striving to improve the diversity and inclusivity of our PPG, following the requests from NHS England to do so. As the PPG duration is time limited, the chairman said that this evening's meeting would be largely given over to our guest speaker, any issues not covered would be held over until our next meeting on 11th January 2024.

2. PRACTICE REPORT: Dr Farrelly delivered a brief Practice Report. Staff changes are limited to the appointment of our new Practice Manager, Nayib Ahmed, who joined the practice on 18th September 2023. Khaled Chowdhury continues to offer financial consultancy and assistance, one day per week, during Nayib's introductory period. A new Pharmacist; Sanya, has also been recruited and she will work a 3 day-week. There have been no other changes in staffing to report.

Dr Farrelly took the opportunity to confirm that the Practice is now offering voluntary face-to-face appointments if requested, and reiterated the need for patients to call the surgery before 11am in the morning if seeking an urgent appointment. If one calls later, the chances are all the slots will be allocated and you will be asked to call back the following morning. (This followed some complaints the chair had received from patients, who are frustrated by the recorded message on the tele-prompt and the system frequently cuts patients off, or is unstable when it has more call volumes than is operationally capable of handling.)

It was suggested that a new and improved Practice Website is needed, and it was confirmed by Dr Farrelly that this is indeed in the pipeline for 2024 as the current contract expires at the end of December, and the team have already invited tenders from IT companies to consider the redesign. The chair raised the important issue of ensuring all patients have access to

online NHS services. Specifically, to the recent Doctor Digital programme held at Tarling East Community Centre and the wider Get Online Week campaign hosted across the borough. Help with digital access was discussed and the additional assistance some patients still require to get comfortable with working online. Any future seminars are to be notified to the Chairman so he can ensure good attendance from local patients who require tuition. Dr Farrelly confirmed that she would notify Carol Taffinder from within the NHS network to give the maximum notice so that patients can benefit from these initiatives.

Tower Hamlets Council are jointly involved in primary care delivery and have commenced a community health initiative visiting schools to strengthen awareness on personal health. Helping Patients Stay Well For Longer, is the new NHS directive in preparing a nation against illness before it occurs. The Council are working with parent groups and teachers, appointing health ambassadors with a particular emphasis on educating families on the benefits of understanding nutrition. Further explaining meal planning and how diet and exercise are so important as the foundation to good health.

3. **GUEST SPEAKER:** Dr Michael James gave an enlightening and interesting presentation on a pilot study he is currently undertaking; the programme analyses the probability for detecting early-stage non-alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease. The programme will consider cultural, ethnic and social influences, and will specifically focus on certain patient groups. The pilot is run in association with Queen Mary's University and lasts 12 months. Wapping Group Practice is an active participant in these studies with some patients with Type 2 diabetes enrolled on the programme. The study involves 10 practices in total, across two locations in the UK. The surgeries are in East London and in Bristol, the pilot runs simultaneously involving a cohort of 7,000 patients. Some patients with confirmed Type 2 diabetes have been screened, which has led to 450 referrals of which more than 300 went on to have specific liver scans. These in turn have led to 42 referrals to the Special Liver Clinic in London, and 90 across both London & Bristol. The emphasis of the study is to pick up as many vulnerable patients as possible who identify with early stage liver scarring, and screening for Fibrosis and cirrhosis. Because 0.2 – 0.5% of patients go on to develop Liver Cancer. The time frame from a normal healthy liver to the severity of severe cirrhosis can be 10-15 years. It is therefore extremely beneficial for patients to be screened early and if the profiling identifies scarring there are possibilities to halt or minimise the progression. This is particularly relevant because non-alcoholic fatty liver disease is benign in terms of patient discomfort and symptomatology. Often patients have no discomfort or pain until such time as the liver is severely compromised.

Cirrhosis of the liver is not treatable. It is also not widely understood that cirrhosis is not only caused from excessive alcohol consumption but is now linked to obesity, and type II diabetes. The two conditions being frequently connected. South Asian patients are also more at risk from diabetes and therefore there is greater focus on this patient group in the study. There are currently no licenced medications available to treat the condition, hence the need to catch the problem as early as possible. Patients are encouraged to make fundamental lifestyle changes impacting upon diet, consuming healthy plant-based foods, low in fat and salt. Patients are encouraged to limit processed foods to a minimum. Exercise regularly. Lose weight to maintain a healthy BMI. Monitor blood pressure levels regularly and act to minimise hypertension. Reduce stress and anxiety.

The take-home message from Dr James was:

1. There is a definitive link between Fatty Liver Disease and Type II diabetes
2. It is a complex two-way relationship.
3. Proper diabetes control is key.
4. Early detection and screening are paramount.
5. The study identifies that certain patient groups are more vulnerable than others.
6. New treatments are in the pipeline.

4. **COVID UPDATE** – All patients who qualify are reminded of the importance of having their booster vaccination as soon as possible as the risk from variant BA. 2.86, is growing over the winter months. All vaccinations are being handled this winter via the Community Pharmacy Enhanced service, and booking of a vaccination should be undertaken online using the Choose and Book NHS Service. Tower Pharmacy is offering a walk-in facility: 9am -7pm Mon - Fri. Patients will need to give their NHS Number to receive a free vaccination.

5. **COMMUNITY NEWS:** The Ward Panel is working closely with the local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) from the Metropolitan Police to ensure the current problem with speeding drivers through Wapping, often racing each other, is being tackled. Please report where you can, Registration Number plates of the vehicles. The police are then act against the drivers, often going to their homes, and speaking with the parents – whose car it often is. Graffiti is another big issue, and we work very closely with the Council and can usually get graffiti removed very quickly. Please report any you see to the local council or to the Ward Panel on: skw.wardpanel@gmail.com

6. St George's Swimming Pool is now closed. It is understood that the Council plans to build a smaller six lane adult training pool, with a small kids splash pool also planned for the current site. Critics are fearful that the site is not sufficiently large enough to provide everything the Council's Communication Company are promising. There are plans for a wider development to include 3- & 4-bedroom flats and office space, as well as dance studios. No time-frame has been given. The chairman has agreed to write to the TH Mayor expressing concern for the dichotomy in the Council narrative. Parents and children are being actively encouraged to engage in a healthier regime of exercise and fitness to combat childhood-obesity. Closure of our community swimming pool, including local leisure and sports centres does nothing to assist our young people who are struggling to access local authority fitness amenities. Likewise, learning to swim is a vital life-skill, and that right should be available to all children equally. Dr Farrelly has supported our community campaign to retain sports and leisure facilities for families including maintaining a swimming pool in Wapping.

The Chairman is again approaching TFL with a view to reviewing the possibility of putting in lifts to Wapping Station platform. With the ULEZ fines, TFL's finances are much improved since the COVID days hence the opportunity to ask them to review their previous refusal on grounds of cost. If he receives positive engagement, he will reconvene the Step-Free Access Committee.

The meeting closed at 7:45pm

NEXT MEETING DATES at 6:15pm at Wapping Group Practice:

JANUARY 11TH 2024

MARCH 7TH 2024

- PLEASE mark your diaries.