Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Community Health Council
Monitoring Visit - Dermatology Department, Glamorgan House, UHW
Wednesday 20th March 2013, at 2.00pm

Monitoring Team (CHC)

Mrs Eleri Jones
Mrs Jill Shelton (Lead)

UHB Representatives

Prof. Vincent Piguet - Professor of Dermatology
Mabs Chowdhury - Lead Consultant Dermatologist
Louise Richards – Nurse Manager
David Hanks – Directorate Manager

Purpose of Visit

Routine Monitoring visit to the Dermatology Services at UHW

Brief Description of Area Visited

The visiting team had been provided with comprehensive briefing papers prior to the visit. The Dermatology Dept is located in Glamorgan House, a former Nurses Home situated in the grounds of UHW. The building has been adapted to meet the needs of the Dermatology Service. Access is level and the building is well signposted with a very limited adjacent parking area. The main Dermatology Services are provided in Glamorgan House with some Clinics and Day Surgery taking place in UHL. On the UHW site there are some ring-fenced Dermatology beds in ward A4 in the main Hospital building.

Glamorgan House has a Day Care Centre which is open Monday to Friday from 8am until 6pm. The Centre provides a range of medical treatments for patients not requiring surgery or in-patient treatment. Some patients come in on a daily basis from 8am to 5pm.

A much valued cosmetic camouflage service has been in place over the last four years for patients who have experienced some disfigurement following significant surgery.
Over the past few years there has been a reduction in the demand for in-patient admissions largely due to the advent of new systemic biologic therapies for patients with severe inflammatory skin conditions. Typically one patient per week requires in-patient admission to one of the ring-fenced beds in ward A4. Many of the patients admitted have both dermatological and general medical conditions and are under the joint care of a dermatologist and a general physician. A nurse from Dermatology visits the in-patients daily to provide specialist treatment and Dermatology Consultants visit as required. The nursing team has a flexible ‘time back’ arrangement with staff who will go into the wards on weekends to provide treatment.

The Outpatient Dept is situated on the ground floor of Glamorgan House in a purpose-designed facility and sees approximately 11,000 new patients and 24,000 follow-up patients per year. There are 23 general and specialist clinics running each week typically with 30 patients seen in each clinic. Conditions seen include suspected cancers such as melanomas, other non-malignant lesions, severe acne, rashes, eczema and psoriasis.

In addition, a skin allergy patch test clinic runs for 3 sessions per week providing a specialist diagnostic service for skin allergy and occupational skin diseases for patients and staff. The Dept benefits from sessions run by the academic medical staff and there is also a session by a photo dermatologist.

Day Surgery
The surgical service is amongst the most comprehensive in the UK with up to 36 theatre sessions per week. Surgery is performed on approximately 5 patients per session for such conditions as malignant melanoma, squamous cell carcinoma and basal cell carcinoma. Of particular note is the ‘One Stop Shop’ clinic where patients attend outpatients during the morning and proceed to surgery for a range of skin cancer conditions in the afternoon. This innovative service has been running for approx. 18 months and has proven to be very effective in providing a speedy assessment and treatment service which is much valued by patients. There is a small waiting list for patients with less urgent conditions.

A number of specialist services are offered by the Dept., one of which is the Light/Phototherapy Service used in the treatment of Psoriasis and Eczema. The service is run by a Phototherapy Nurse Specialist with support from two other qualified Phototherapists and provides a range of diagnostic and therapy services to patients on 4 days per week. The Light/phototherapy service sees about 40-45 patients daily and has become a victim of its own success by creating a waiting list of 3-4 months with patients being referred to the service from across the South East Wales area and Gloucestershire. Funding for this service is an issue; given additional staff, and using the existing machinery, the service could be offered during evenings and at weekends thus benefiting children with Psoriasis for whom waiting for treatment can be detrimental. Staffing is the main constraint to the expansion of this service.

Teledermatology is offered by several of the Consultant medical staff working in conjunction with local GPs to provide a kind of triage system for patients.

The GPs are able to email pictures of dermatological conditions to the Consultants for specialist review and receive a response within 24-48 hours whether to discharge the patient, offer
treatment advice or refer the patient for surgery. This results in about 70% of patients not requiring to be seen in Dermatology Outpatients and helps train GPs to manage future cases. This Teledermatology service has received an NHS Wales Innovation award.

Biologics Service
The development of biologic drug therapy has been a major step forward in the treatment of some chronic dermatological conditions. Three sessions per week are allocated each week for the provision of biologic infusions, injections and related patient administration on a Day Unit basis.

Academic Dermatology
The Academic Dermatology Dept. has gained an international reputation for excellence. It is led by Professor Vincent Piquet and offers a wide range of education, training, and research facilities as well as undertaking clinical work alongside NHS colleagues. Some of this cooperative work involves running joint clinics with specialists in Infection and Immunology- for example, some clinics have been held in conjunction with Rheumatology, Oncology and Paediatrics. It is of great benefit to have a reasonably sized unit with expertise concentrated in one place.

The Dept is very active in the professional development and education programmes for undergraduate/post-graduate medical staff, specialist nurses and GPs. The GMC has placed Cardiff Academic Dermatology in the top-rank for training. The number of Consultant Dermatologists has doubled over the past 17 years and many of these were trained in Cardiff.

Patient's Views

The visiting team were able to speak to a number of patients. Without exception they praised the treatment they received from the Dept. and there was little they wanted changed. Patients valued being able to be treated on an outpatient basis- one patient who was a carer for his wife said that receiving treatment in this way meant he could plan his life and provide care at home rather than his wife having to go into respite care whilst he received treatment as an inpatient.

Matters to be Commended

- The excellent service offered to patients by the Dermatology Dept.
- The flexible approach of staff to delivering the service on weekends or on off-duty time.
- The innovative Teledermatology service
- The ‘One Stop Shop’ Clinic/Surgery sessions
- The importance and excellence of Clinical Trials.
- The development of services regionally, particularly that for Paediatrics
- The close links between the Dept. and the Academic side has provided a number of benefits
  - lecturers contribute directly to clinical care
  - Some of the newer therapies have been attracted to Cardiff
  - GP training in skin diseases is doing well, some 300+ GPs nationally and internationally have taken Cardiff courses.
  - The strong and motivated team ethos of the Dept at all levels from consultants downward.
The high level of cleaning care provided by Wayne the Cleaner

Matters of Concern

- Outpatient Demand and Waiting Times
  Outpatient referrals have escalated in recent years due to greater public awareness of skin cancer risks - the effects of the rise in package holidays to the ‘Costas’ in the 60’s is now becoming evident in the older population. The Dept is only just managing to achieve Welsh Government targets on waiting times with the current 11,500 patients.

- Escalating Costs of Biologic Therapy
  The dept is an extensive user of anti-Tumour Necrosis Factor (anti-TNF) therapies. These are prescribed according to NICE guidelines but cost about £10,000 per patient per annum. There are currently 100 patients in receipt of this treatment and the numbers requiring this treatment are likely to grow and present a significant financial challenge to the service.

- Capacity in the Phototherapy Service
  There has been a significant increase in demand for this service particularly from young children. Capacity is constrained by staffing levels. Finance is proving a barrier to expansion of the service.

Recommendations to Council

That the Dermatology Dept be congratulated on the high quality of its service. Council to encourage the UHB to direct additional funding to the Dermatology Dept. to allow it to increase capacity to meet projected future demand for Dermatological Services.

The visiting team would like to thank Professor Piguet, Mabs Chowdhury, Louise Richards and David Hanks for their time and assistance during this visit.

Jill Shelton