

## Barnabas PPG

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**From:** Barnabas PPG <barnabas.ppg@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** 16 July 2017 14:22  
**To:** Barnabas PPG  
**Subject:** Barnabas PPG Monthly Bulletin, July

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To All Barnabas PPG Members ...  
[Printed copies to those PPG members without email]

[There are no attached documents this month, but if you want printed copies of anything mentioned, please contact me and I'll try to send you a copy.]

Welcome to the July bulletin for Barnabas PPG members.

### **PPG Meeting, Monday 7 August**

Our next meeting on Monday 7 August, 1800 to 2000 hrs, is a purely social occasion with no formal agenda.  
Come and join us for a drink at the Greenwood pub on Whitton Avenue West – just drop by at any time between 6 and 8 pm.

### **Meet the Patients – Volunteers Wanted**

This month's PPG "Meet the Patients" session is on the afternoon of Tuesday 25 July. In the next day or so I will drop a note to those who have volunteered to help with this session. Anyone is welcome to come along to the waiting area and meet some of us.

### **Practice's Annual Patient Survey**

A very big thank you to those who helped run this year's Patient Survey for the Practice – and extra thanks because I asked most of the volunteers to do rather more than they might have liked in order that we could cover almost all the targeted sessions; that amounted to around 90 man-hours effort. I am still analysing the results, and writing the report for the Practice, however here are a few early headlines:

- We collected 408 completed surveys (roughly a 5% sample of the patient list) with 80% of people approached completing the survey.
- We collected over 550 comments.
- 90% of respondents say they are "Extremely Likely" or "Likely" to recommend the Practice.
- Almost 75% of patients would like to be able to have telephone consultations with a doctor.
- Around 95% of people agree that it is important for people to care for their own health, but from the comments a lack of knowledge and information is holding people back.
- The biggest gripe is the roughly 30% who are unhappy with the timely availability of appointments.
- A third of respondents know about the PPG with 36 people asking for more information on the group, although only 8 of them left contact details.

I will provide a fuller summary of the results in next month's bulletin, when completed the final data analysis report will be put on the Practice website, and at a future meeting we should discuss what the PPG could do.

And now a selection of recent NHS news ...

### **Patient Prescription Fines have Doubled in a Year**

It is being reported by the NHS that almost a million people were fined in the last financial year (2016-17) for claiming free prescriptions when they were not entitled to do so. This is almost double the number in 2015-16. The fines amounted to some £13.3million in addition to the reclaimed prescription charges. The largest cause seems to be people who continue to claim free prescriptions when their exemption or pre-payment card has expired. So don't get caught out! There's a full report at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-40448734>.

### **NHS Rationing**

There is yet another report that the NHS in England is rationing care. Although not explicitly stated as such this seems to be because of tougher qualification criteria for treatments such as hip and knee replacements and cataract surgery. Of course the whole area is not straightforward and there is an appeal procedure. However, from a patient perspective, one can't help feeling that this is counter-productive as delaying many of these operations is merely postponing the inevitable while spending extra money on pain-killing drugs, physiotherapy, and the like while not helping the worst affected return to work. Again there is a full BBC report at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-40485724>.

### **NHS Breaks Data Privacy Laws**

Some of you will recall that a while back the Royal Free Hospital (with others) embarked on a research study into kidney injury in collaboration with Google's DeepMind super-computing initiative. The BBC (again) has reported the decision by the UK Information Commissioner that the NHS did not sufficiently protect the privacy of around 1.6 million patients. The NHS Trust involved has not been fined – what would be the point; it would just be government money going round in circles and less money available for patient care – but the Trust has agreed to significantly tighten up the way it handles data and informs patients. The good news here is that patient privacy is taken seriously, there is oversight, and the Information Commission has and uses its teeth. The BBC report is at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-40483202>.

### **Routine DNA Tests**

In her annual report the UK Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davies, suggests that genomic (DNA) testing should become a normal part of NHS care, beginning with cancer patients and those with rare diseases. This would enable drugs to be better matched to the disease and the patient, thus reducing side-effects and maximising the benefits. Dame Sally suggests that DNA testing of patients should become as normal as blood tests and biopsies within five years. (However, this seems to me to be a huge challenge which will require not just a culture change on the part of patents but also massive investment.) The report, this time from the *Guardian*, is at <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2017/jul/04/make-dna-tests-routine-part-of-nhs-care-says-uks-chief-medical-officer>.

More next month, but meanwhile I hope to see you at the Greenwood on 7 August.

Keith

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