

Building new relationships: at home and worldwide

Change is a recurring manifestation within today's healthcare system and is a predictable component within the NHS. Today's healthcare professionals are being encouraged to be "partners for health" with a wide range of organisations outside of the healthcare system itself and to become involved in a wider range of health interventions. Partnerships between health and social care and third sector organisations are evolving rapidly in the private and primary health sectors, with an aim to provide the most effective seamless service meeting the needs of the local population. The 1990s contractual reforms for General Practitioners (GPs), and the introduction of a purchaser/provider system in an internal market, enabled GPs to exercise discretion in the purchase of services from the independent sector. An example of today's GPs and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) meeting the medical and social needs of their practice population is demonstrated with the advent of the Foundation working with General Practices and commissioned services on managing leg ulcers in the community. It has presented the Leg Club Foundation with new exciting pathways to expand its patient-centered, socioeconomic approach to lower limb management within these parameters.

The Leg Club model focused on the importance of the primary healthcare teams working together, utilising all their available skills, knowledge and resources, emphasising the importance of effective teamwork to achieve a seamless service. In the current NHS climate, General Practices are faced with major challenges of using resources more efficiently and meeting the needs of an ageing population. At the invitation by GP consortia in North Somerset, the concept of the psychosocial Leg Club model was presented at a multidisciplinary practice meeting, which was open to their registered patients and the general public. Questions were taken from Practice Managers and Community Nurses, members of patient groups plus some groups such as the Rotary and Lion Clubs, in addition to Practice Managers, CCG Leadership Group members and GPs. Following the meeting and with the support

of the GP partners, managers, community and Practice Nurses, the CCG elected to embark on setting up Leg Clubs in North Somerset.

The General Practice team involved their local community from the outset, working with their current practice patients, informing them of the proposed changes and inviting them to participate in setting up and running their local Leg Club. As with all potential Leg Club teams, staff were encouraged to visit existing Leg Clubs in other areas, to see the model in action and liaise with volunteers, members and staff, observing the organisational structure of the Club. Following a further meeting with the general public, the Practice Manager and team are now in a position with a committee and group of volunteers to drive the Leg Club model forward.

THE FOUNDATION'S FUTURE

The Leg Club Foundation is a pioneering charity created to reflect all aspects of leg-related problems and their management. As a third sector "not for profit" organisation, the Foundation consistently strives to ensure the charity remains patient-focused and directed at the heart of patient-centred care, communities, clinical education and public health promotion. This collaborative approach with patients, volunteers and the community has maintained service delivery successfully using a social and cost-effective methodology, bringing creative ideas to life.

With demographic changes, we are increasingly seeing the over sixty-five age group living in social isolation owing to movement of their families, and communities becoming more fragmented due to the changes in the social classes. Loneliness and isolation can be a major factor in the community and people with leg ulcers may experience a further sense of isolation and loss of social contact due to immobility, which can have a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing. The Leg Club philosophy recognises the need to move concentration away from 'clinical' and support what is pro-social, productive, and fulfilling. The future of the Foundation is to continue to work proactively with partners to maintain and improve health, with

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the aim to reduce the future incidence of lower limb disease, which is important and necessary for continued mobility and good health.

NEW PATRON JOINS THE FOUNDATION

The Lindsay Leg Club Foundation is delighted to announce that Professor Marco Romanelli from the University of Pisa has agreed to become one of its patrons. Professor Romanelli, Assistant Professor of Dermatology at the School of Medicine in Pisa and Chief of the Wound Healing Research Unit at the Division of Dermatology, has extensive clinical experience of managing patients with leg ulceration and is a keen supporter of the Lindsay Leg Club model. The extensive knowledge and experience he has gained throughout his distinguished career, combined with his standing as a well-known figure in the wound care and tissue viability community, will be hugely supportive and beneficial to the Foundation. Professor Romanelli is President-elect of the World Union of Wound Healing Societies and is currently organising its 5th World Congress to be held in Florence, Italy, in 2016. As chair of the Task Force for Patients Associations, the Foundations President Ellie Lindsay OBE will have an important role in the organisation of the Congress and will be responsible for chairing a scientific symposium on patient experience as well as promoting the foundation of several different branches of Patients' Associations from around the world.

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

The greatest benefits to individuals living with chronic conditions can be provided by simple, cost-effective treatments. This is of vital importance in improving patients' quality of life, and cost savings can also be felt by wider society. Patients' views about advancement in technology need to be heard in all levels of government if the NHS is to be responsive to their needs. Patients understand the day-to-day realities of their conditions, and are thus best placed to decide how medical technologies can help them manage their condition, remain independent and enjoy a better quality of life.

The Medical Technology Group (MTG) addresses this by providing a forum for patient



Professor Marco Romanelli, President-elect of the World Union of Wound Healing Societies and Ellie Lindsay OBE, President of the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation

representatives to discuss their needs directly with medical technology manufacturers, which helps keep patients' views at the forefront of device development. The MTG's regular engagement with clinicians, commissioners, public bodies and parliamentarians seeks to improve understanding of patients' views and ensure they are factored into NHS and policy decisions.

The MTG has continued its efforts to raise awareness of the value of medical technology to patients, the health service and wider society.

John Spellar MP greeted patients and carers from across the country in Westminster recently as part of a coordinated Patient Action Day. The group, which included representatives of the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation, took the opportunity to bring the importance of medical technology to the attention of Parliamentarians. MTG members and guests, including representatives of the NHS, then heard from patients, Trusts and clinicians at a parliamentary reception.

The MTG has also continued its research activity, with its latest report focusing on healthcare-acquired infections. The report found that most NHS Trusts are unaware of the full scale, cost and impact of infections such as sepsis and norovirus. The study attracted widespread media coverage including the *British Medical Journal* and the *Consultant*, as well as major regional titles. The MTG is becoming an increasingly influential organisation and its ranks have swelled in the past few months with the addition of several new, high profile industry and patient group members. For more information about the work of the MTG visit www.mtg.org.uk

