

# The GP Direct Journal

Volume 5 Issue 4

**Calling all patients: We are recruiting members to our Patient Reference Group - Read more in the Editor's column**

**Enjoy the sunny weather safely - Read our guide in our 'Eye on Medicine'**

**We recap our Hay fever and Travel vaccination advice**

**Catch up with the latest news in the 'News Round Up'**

## Editor's column

In this edition of the Journal we are calling on enthusiastic and opinionated patients to join our patient reference group (PRG). We currently have a patient group within the Practice but we are looking to create a more representative group in terms of gender, age, background, specific health needs and skills that you can bring to the group.

The PRG will meet at least once every two months and will be involved in major decisions and setting key priorities with the Practice that effect patient care, reviewing survey results and agreeing an action plan for improvement. If you're interested please read more about the PRG in the Patient Corner section.

In addition to the main PRG we will also be creating a virtual PRG which will operate solely on email. The purpose of the virtual PRG is to seek your views about the service we offer through online surveys or to simply seek your views about major decisions or changes that are planned within the Practice. If you would like to be part of the virtual PRG please complete a form which you can collect from reception.

There's also been a lot of goings on in the Practice over the past few months, first of all we would like to welcome on board Carol Joy (CJ) Geron our new nurse practitioner who joined us in April. She sees patients with short term medical complaints alongside our on call doctors as well as managing long term chronic diseases like Diabetes, Asthma, COPD and Hypertension. We also have a new female salaried GP joining us in May, her name is Dr. Bahar Amin.

We would also like you to join us in congratulating Dr. Haia Elachkar and Dr. Imran Rashid our GP Registrars who recently passed their important final GP examination.

Finally in this edition of the GP Direct Journal we will cover some important issues related to keeping healthy this summer.

*Omer Hussein*

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## In this quarter's Journal we will explain the role of the Patient Reference Group (PRG) through some commonly asked questions.

Q) What are the main functions of the Patient Reference Group (PRG)?

A) The Patient Reference Group's (PRG) main function is to act as the representative of all patients in the Practice. The PRG members will be well advertised within the Practice so that their names and contact details are available for so patients to contact them to raise issues or suggestions on their behalf. The PRG will also be involved in agreeing priorities with the Practice to look at and will work with the management in assessing the results of local surveys and agreeing plans for improvement.

Q) Who should apply to be a member of PRG and how do you go about this?

A) Anyone can apply to be a member of the PRG. However you need to consider your time availability as we will meet at least once every two months (most likely on a Wednesday evening) in addition to preparing for meetings and any contact with the patients as a PRG member. It is important that members are willing to share their views, communicate with each other and be representatives for all patients from different walks of life. We want the group to be as representative as possible so if you feel you can commit please put your name forward by speaking to either Omer Hussein or Katherine Jhumann.

Q) I can't commit to the PRG but is there a way I can share my views and suggestions with the Practice?

A) Any patient can share their views with the Practice whether they are part of the PRG or not. The easiest way is to put your suggestion in the suggestion box located at our reception desk. You can also request to speak to the Duty manager in person or over the phone. However in an effort to get seek your views more regularly about the service we offer and regarding major decisions within the Practice we will be setting up a parallel Virtual PRG which we will communicate with solely on email, we already have dozens of people who have signed up, if you would like to sign up you can complete a form which is available at reception or you can email [info@gpdirect.co.uk](mailto:info@gpdirect.co.uk) with the message "Virtual PRG sign up".

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# Eye on Medicine - Staying safe this Summer

With the warmest April on record just behind us I think it is now safe to say its only going to getting warmer now on in. However the sun poses its own danger to our health. One study showed as many as 100,000 new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed every year. It is estimated that as many as 90% of skin cancers are preventable due some basic but highly effective precautions you can take.

Therefore in this quarter's eye on medicine we have given a summary of some of the top tips that Cancer Research UK advise in their SunSmart campaign.

- Try and keep out of the Sun during the middle of the day (especially between 11am and 3pm) as the Sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays are at their most intense then. In the UK the highest risk months are from May to September.
- You should try and keep in the shade, covering commonly burnt areas, like the shoulders and face, with clothing, hats and sunglasses. The more skin that is covered by your clothing the better the protection, for more details on the type of clothing, hats and sunglasses that will offer the best protection go to [www.sunsmart.org.uk](http://www.sunsmart.org.uk)
- Sunscreens can be useful in protecting our skin from the Sun's rays however they do not protect us completely and therefore should be used in conjunction with shade or clothing. You should buy a sunscreen with Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15 and which is "broad spectrum" with a star rating of four stars or more. You should never use sunscreen in order to spend longer in the sun.

For more information on enjoying the Sun safely please go to [www.sunsmart.org.uk](http://www.sunsmart.org.uk) which is the campaign website of SunSmart which is run by Cancer Research UK and was commissioned by the UK Health Department. We also have a booklet produced by Cancer Research UK for the SunSmart campaign at reception; please feel free to ask for this.

You can also download a range of useful resources from their website.

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## Hay Fever seasonal advice

If you have been prescribed Hay Fever medication in the past you can re-request it like any repeat medicine and it will be issued within two working days. If you have not been prescribed Hay Fever medication at the Practice or if you require advice please request a telephone consultation with one of our doctors.

## Our 5 point guide to travel vaccinations

1. You should aim to get your travel vaccinations completed well before you travel (at a bare minimum at least two weeks before traveling).
2. You should check which vaccinations you require by visiting the fit for travel website which has been set up by NHS (Scotland) as a free resource for the general public. You will find a link for this site on [www.gpdirect.co.uk](http://www.gpdirect.co.uk)
3. If you do not have a record of your current vaccination record you should call the Practice and request for one of our Practice Nurses to give you a call and they will update you as to what you require.
4. Most travel vaccinations are free of charge however some do incur a charge, such as Yellow Fever (£50) and Meningitis ACWY (£30), for up to date prices please visit our website and click on the Non-NHS fees section, when you pay for a vaccination you will also receive a certificate.
5. Malaria protection varies depending on your destination. Some anti-Malaria protection is prescribed by the Practice privately (at a cost of £15) and should then be taken to the Pharmacy to be dispensed (the charge of the medication will be charged by the Pharmacy). However some anti-Malaria medication has to be bought directly from the pharmacy without a prescription. The type of medication required will depend on your destination. If in doubt about your travel vaccination protection please request to speak to one of our Practice nurses.

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## News Round Up

### Patient Partner and EMIS Access go from strength to strength

In April around 15% of all GP appointments were booked using one of these two methods. Patient Partner offers patients the option of booking using the automated system by simply calling the main number and pressing option 1, same day appointments become available from 5am in the morning allowing you to call early before the Surgery even opens to get your appointment on the day. EMIS Access allows you to book online, additionally you can request repeat medication, message the Practice securely and also update your contact details online. For an EMIS Access account request a registration document from reception (you will have to bring in your passport or photo ID driving license as proof of ID).



## GP Commission – the planned transition explained in a nutshell

The current government wants to empower GPs to take on commissioning (purchasing) of health services in all localities, in our instance Harrow. The top board where GPs from a locality would make decisions is called the GP Commissioning Consortium (GPCC) or Clinical Commissioning board (CCB). Currently it's a temporary board consisting of five GPs in Harrow. Dr Nizar Merali is one of them. A new board will be elected by this summer which will still be a transitional board. This transitional board will exist until the end of March 2013 when the final board will be formed. It will not be until April 2013 that the GPCC will actually take over fully the responsibility of the commissioning (purchasing) of health care services. Presently the transitional board or the shadow board is learning and jointly participating in decisions with NHS Harrow, namely the Chief Executive, The Finance Director, the Borough Director and the rest of the team. Commissioning occurs both at Harrow level and at North West London level. In the latter case this is when the purchasing is of a larger value and for a larger population. An example of this would be procurement of services from the local hospital, namely Northwick Park Hospital where we spend in excess of £150M.

The present and future GPs on the board will make decisions on behalf of the all the GPs and for the benefit of the whole of Harrow's 230,000 population. Besides the services commissioned from the hospital the board is responsible for the commissioning of mental health services, the community services (health visitors, district nurses etc) and primary care services (GP services).

### Have we got your address right? Act now or you may be removed

NHS Harrow is carrying out an extensive list validation exercise which involves writing to all registered patients asking them to confirm that they are still registered with their GP Practice and that still live at the address they have written to. "If they do not receive a response within a few weeks they then contact the Practice with a list of patients they will remove who have either not replied to NHS Harrow or where a letter has been returned undelivered". Therefore please ensure you respond to these letters in a timely fashion otherwise you risk being removed from the Practice list. Also please ensure that you inform us of a change of address so that NHS Harrow writes to you at your present address.



# Shaftesbury Pharmacy

5/6 Shaftesbury Parade

South Harrow

Middx HA2 0AJ

Tel: 020 8864 9436

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday: 9.00am - 7.00pm

Saturday: 10.00am – 1.00pm

Would you like your prescriptions collected from GP Direct and your medication ready for collection at the Pharmacy? Save a journey to the surgery and waiting at the Pharmacy!

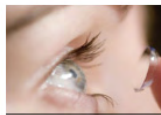
Let Shaftesbury Pharmacy know and this can be arranged.  
Patient care is our priority.

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