

# The GP

# Direct Journal

*Keeping you informed*

**November 2011 – Volume 6 Issue 2**

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## Editor's Column

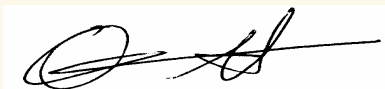
As you are aware, the UK is facing huge financial pressures and no government department will be immune from the austerity measures that have been put in place to deal with the challenges ahead. Harrow, in particular, has been set very tough targets, as it has a historical budget deficit that preceded the recession. Dr. Wahid Shaida explains how these changes may affect you on page 4.

We hope you will join us in wishing Katherine Jhumann the very best following her recent retirement as Practice Manager. In her seven years leading the Practice, Katherine has brought about lasting improvements and steadiness to the Surgery.

We would also like to wish Dr. Bahar Amin and Nurse Practitioner CJ Geron the very best during their maternity leave. Dr. Amin is due back around May 2012 and CJ will be due back in June 2012.

Dr Abedi, who has worked as a locum at the Practice since April, will be Dr. Amin's maternity replacement for the next six months, starting this November. We will also have a new nurse practitioner joining us in December who will support our patients with chronic disease management and seeing patients alongside the doctors.

You may recall in the last GP Direct Journal we announced that we would be undertaking a local survey at the Practice. This has now been completed at we will share the key results with you in this issue. We will be publishing a more detailed report within the next few months which will be available on our website and at the Surgery. We would like to thank the 208 participants who took the time to complete the Survey. Read more about the Survey on pages 5 & 6.



Omer Hussein

## Flu vaccination – last walk-in clinic on 26<sup>th</sup> November

As we go to print with the latest issue of *The GP Direct Journal* more than 2,000 of you have already had your flu vaccination this year. The vaccine gives the best possible protection against the main flu strains circulating this winter. There are still many patients who fall in at risk groups who have not yet had the vaccine this year. We wrote to all patients who fell into one of the following groups as they are recommended to have the flu vaccination:

- Aged 65 years and over
- Have a serious medical condition such as Diabetes, Asthma and Heart Disease
- Have a compromised immunity
- Pregnant women
- Carers
- You are living in a long-stay residential care home or other long-stay care facility

We have one final flu vaccination walk-in clinic for patients in an at risk group on **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2011 from 9.30am to 12noon at Welbeck Road Surgery**. If you are unable to attend this clinic you can still book an appointment with one of our practice nurses at another time. It is highly recommended that you are vaccinated by November as the main flu strains will be in circulation during the winter period.



Image: Michal Marcol / FreeDigitalPhotos.net

## NHS Changes – How they might affect you?

As you know, the country is facing huge financial pressures, and these have an impact on the delivery of health care. The following measures are new policies adopted at a level outside our practice that we at GP Direct have to comply with as best we can. Hence, you may find some changes in future as compared with how things were done before:

**1. Prescribing medication** – GPs are encouraged more than ever to prescribe medication that is more cost effective – meaning less expensive drugs that do the same job. You may find that you are asked to make some changes to your medicines because of these reasons. Moreover, GPs are expected to only prescribe medication where there is good evidence to support its usage. Many medicines you may have received in the past may not fall into this category

**2. Referring for specialist opinions** – for certain conditions GPs are no longer allowed to refer patients unless they meet certain criteria. This restricts the doctors in when they can refer people in a way that is new.

**3. Referring for tests and investigations** – GPs are expected more than ever to ensure they only order tests when they are appropriate and justifiable and not duplicating tests done before.

As with all things, savings on one side mean that money can be spent in other areas. By prescribing less expensive, but as effective medication, more operations can be funded. By referring for specialist opinions and tests more appropriately, serious illnesses can be dealt with faster.

We appreciate that some people may find some of these changes awkward and unsettling but would appreciate cooperation wherever possible, but as always we are willing to listen to our patients' views and use the existing systems as best we can for our patients' benefit.

## The Local Patient Survey – summary of the results

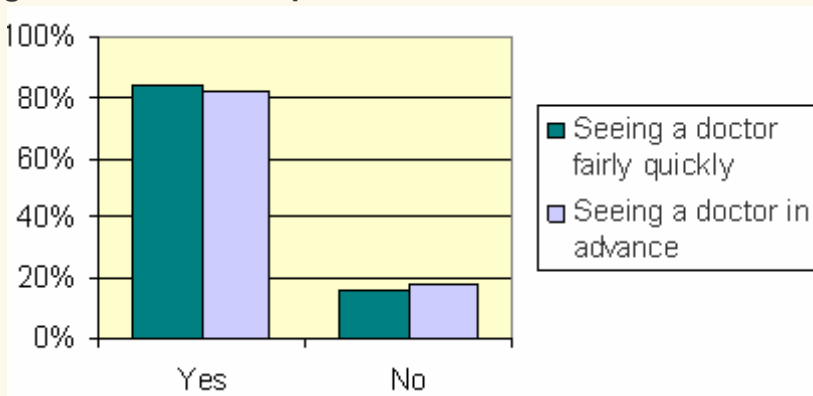
We conducted a patient survey in August and September 2011 through an electronic version which was emailed to all patients on our database and via hard copies at all three of our sites. Thank you to all the 208 participants who took the time to complete the survey.

We discussed the results of the Survey at the Patient Reference Group meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2011. On the range of questions about the doctor, which included questions about taking your problems seriously, and showing you care and concern, 87% of respondents graded the doctors as good or very good.

Two-thirds of those patients who stated they had a preferred doctor or doctors said they could see them always, almost always, or a lot of the time and only 2% said they were not able to see their preferred doctor never or almost never.

In respect to being able to book an appointment to see a doctor or nurse practitioner fairly quickly (within two days) 84% said they were able to and 82% of respondents said they were able to book in advance (more than two days) to see a doctor or nurse practitioner.

### Seeing a doctor or nurse practitioner

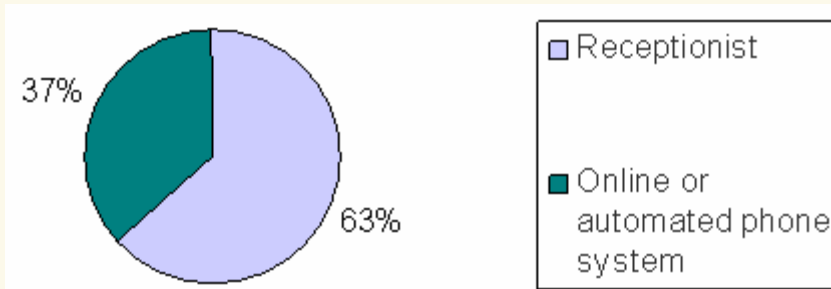


Around four-fifths of you said you were able to see a nurse at a convenient time.

Interestingly, more than one in three of you now say you book your doctor's appointment by using the online booking system (EMIS Access)

or the automated telephone system. This corresponds with a month on month increase our figures show of users of both systems.

### Method of booking an appointment



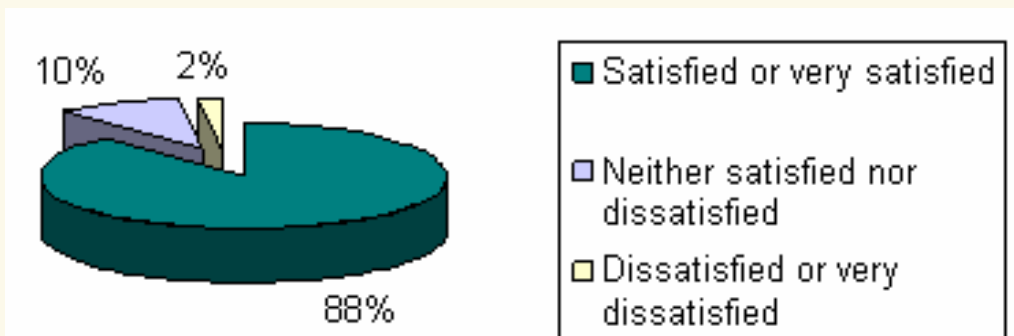
Over 82% of respondents stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the appointment system.

When asked about satisfaction with opening hours at the Practice, close to nine in 10 (87%) of you said you were either satisfied or very satisfied. Most respondents preferred morning, evening and afternoon appointments in that order. Only 7% of patients preferred weekend appointments.

More than four in five of respondents felt the receptionists were good or very good in respect to being helpful and friendly. When asked about how well receptionists offered alternatives when their main choice was not available, around 73% said this was good or better.

Finally with regards to overall satisfaction at the Practice, around 88% of you said you were satisfied or very satisfied.

### Overall satisfaction with the Practice



## News round up

### Alexandra Avenue walk-in centre changes

The walk-in centre at Alexandra Avenue is changing the way it works from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012. There will no longer be a walk-in service for urgent care patients from Monday to Friday. The Saturday/Sunday and bank holiday walk-in service will continue from 8am to 4pm, with last entry at 3.30pm. The clinic will not be offering travel vaccines, repeat prescriptions and routine checks. It is important that you call the Surgery during our normal opening hours, which are Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.30pm.

### Requesting repeat prescriptions

Please allow for **two full working days** for your repeat prescription to be issued. You must request your medication in writing. You can do this by:

- dropping off the request to one of our Surgeries
- use your EMIS Access account to request it online
- faxing it to 020 8515 9310,
- send it by post to GP Direct, 3-7 Welbeck Road, Harrow, HA2 0RQ

If you would like your prescription to be posted to you, please ensure you enclose a self addressed envelope with a stamp. You can nominate a pharmacy to collect your prescriptions on your behalf; for more information ask at reception or speak to your preferred pharmacy.

### Patient Reference Group (PRG) Update

The PRG met in mid September to discuss the results of The Local Patient Survey. We have agreed an action plan based on the results, which we will publish as part of a report by early 2012. You can contact the PRG directly through the chairwoman, Mrs. Shaw on 020 8904 6395 or by emailing her on [gpdirect-prg@nhs.net](mailto:gpdirect-prg@nhs.net). You can also leave comments or suggestions in specifically designated boxes at all three of our reception areas. Please leave your name if you would like us to respond to you directly.

