

The GP



Direct Journal

Keeping you informed

November 2010 – Volume 5 Issue 2

We unveil our new automated appointment system in the *patient corner*

We meet Dr. Imtiaz Gulamali in the *meet the doctor segment*

We give some advice on managing coughs & colds in our *eye on medicine*

We catch up with the latest news in the *News roundup*

You can telephone us at any time night or day to book, check or cancel your appointment.

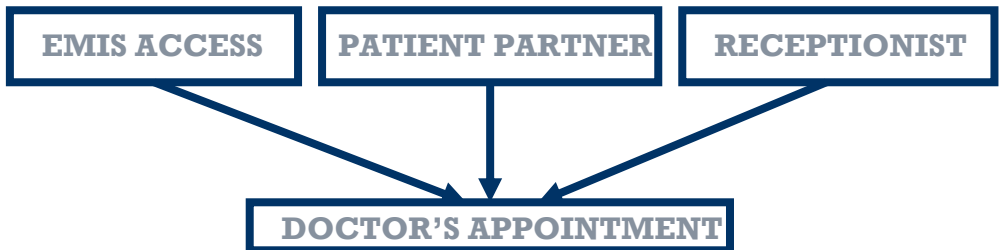
As always it has been an eventful three months here at the Practice. We bided a temporary farewell to Dr. Akil Nurmohamed who has gone on a one year sabbatical from October 2010 and is due back to the Practice in October 2011. We have welcomed three new GP registrars at the Practice, they are Drs Imran Rashid, Hala Elachkar & Nilanjana Gupta.

We are receiving positive feedback about our new appointment system which allows you to book appointments up to four weeks in advance with your doctor of choice or to be seen on the same day if your problem requires more immediate attention by anyone of our doctors. We would like to remind you if you want to be seen by a particular doctor you might have to book sometime in advance, primarily because their sessions are now on the system four weeks in advance and secondly because they may not be working during certain weeks due to other commitments. Therefore be prepared to see other doctors for your immediate medical concerns.

Finally we have a new exciting software called Patient Partner which allows you to book, check or cancel appointments around the clock, literally night or day using our automated appointment telephone system. Just call us on 020 8515 9300 and press option 1 when we are open or closed to use the system, read more about this software in the *Patient Corner*.

We also discuss how colds, coughs, sore throats and the flu can be managed in our eye on medicine.

Making appointments accessible when you need them is one of our major priorities; therefore you can use any one of the following three methods to book an appointment if you need to see a doctor.



Omer Hussein

In this quarter's *patient corner* we're unveiling our new automated appointment booking system

In late October we launched Patient Partner, an automated telephone booking system which allows you to book (doctors and blood test appointments), cancel and check your booked appointments around the clock, seven days a week. Avoid the rush for appointments in the morning or book ahead with your doctor of choice by using the system anytime day or night (occasionally the system is not available during essential maintenance). Here is a simple guide on how to use the system:

Call the Surgery on **020 8515 9300** (when we are **open or closed**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week) and **Press 1** to use the automated booking system

You will be asked to input your **date of birth in the form of six digits**, e.g. if you are born on the 4th August 1972 you would put in 04.08.72

You will then be asked to put in your **telephone number** (landline or mobile) followed by the * key

Press 1 to make a new appointment or **Press 2** to check, cancel or change an existing appointment

You will then be asked a couple of questions about **where you want to be seen and by whom**

The automated booking system allows you to choose where you want to be seen, i.e. Welbeck Road, Eastcote Lane or Butler Avenue and by whom, so you can choose to search for available appointments with any doctor or for any male or female doctors. However you can also specifically search for appointments with Drs Merali, Sherif, Yaqoob, Gulamali, Ahmad, Khan, Shaida, Hamdulay and Masrani. You can also book blood test appointments for both Welbeck Road and Eastcote Lane.

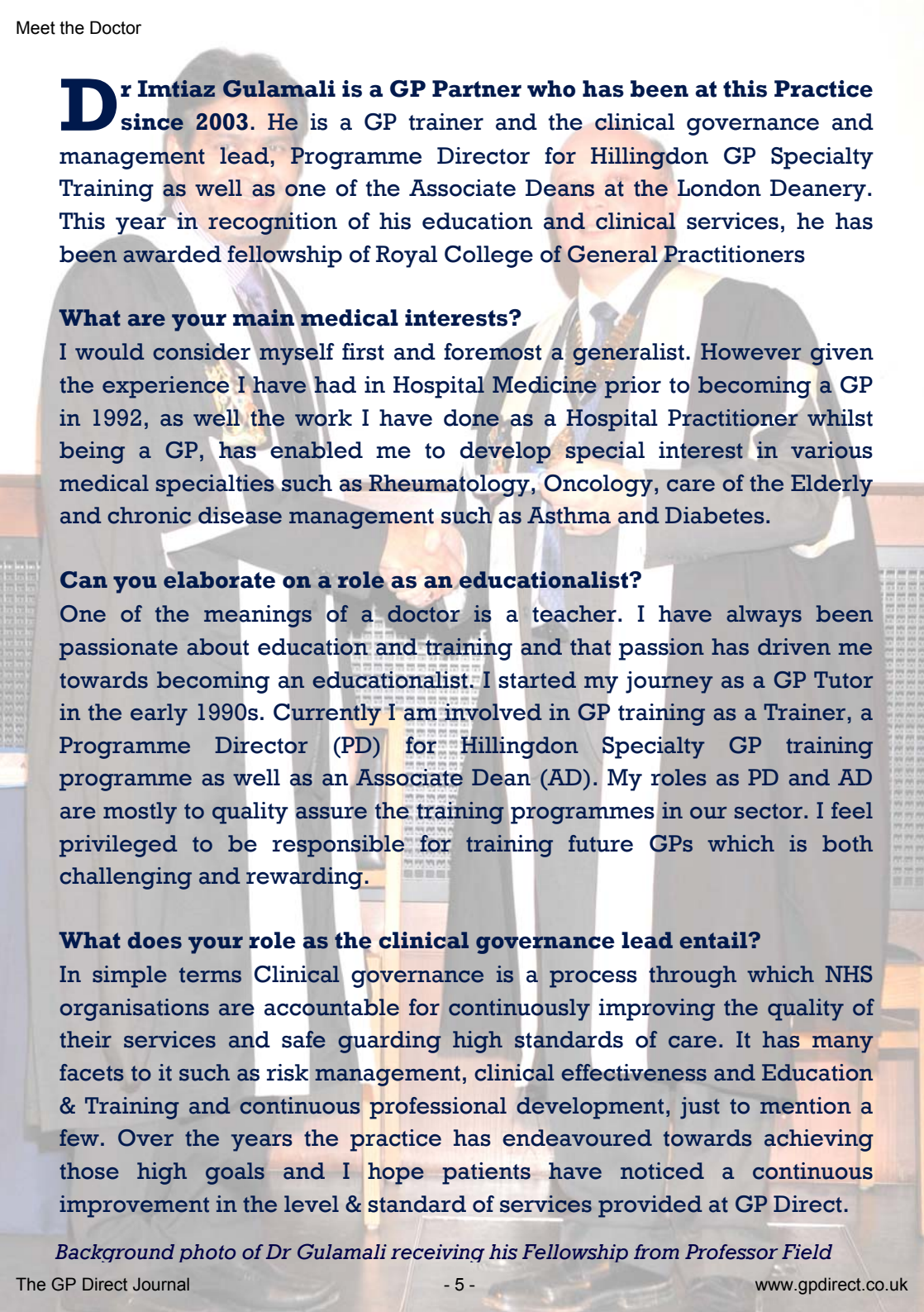
It is very important that we have your up to date telephone numbers on record (landline and mobile) as this system uses your date of birth and one of your telephone numbers as the method of verifying your details. You can leave a message to update your records using the automated system or you can contact the Practice directly to update your records.

To ease the congestion of the morning rush for same day appointments we have made them **available from 5am in the morning**, that will give you three hours in which you can use the automated telephone appointment system or EMIS Access to book an appointment before the Surgery is open.

The automated telephone appointment system and EMIS Access are just additional options available to you to help you manage your appointments, if you prefer to speak to a receptionist to book an appointment or have specific requirements (e.g. you want a telephone consultation) you always have the option of speaking to one of our receptionists from 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday.



Image: Filomena Scalise / FreeDigitalPhotos.net



Dr Imtiaz Gulamali is a GP Partner who has been at this Practice since 2003. He is a GP trainer and the clinical governance and management lead, Programme Director for Hillingdon GP Specialty Training as well as one of the Associate Deans at the London Deanery. This year in recognition of his education and clinical services, he has been awarded fellowship of Royal College of General Practitioners

What are your main medical interests?

I would consider myself first and foremost a generalist. However given the experience I have had in Hospital Medicine prior to becoming a GP in 1992, as well the work I have done as a Hospital Practitioner whilst being a GP, has enabled me to develop special interest in various medical specialties such as Rheumatology, Oncology, care of the Elderly and chronic disease management such as Asthma and Diabetes.

Can you elaborate on a role as an educationalist?

One of the meanings of a doctor is a teacher. I have always been passionate about education and training and that passion has driven me towards becoming an educationalist. I started my journey as a GP Tutor in the early 1990s. Currently I am involved in GP training as a Trainer, a Programme Director (PD) for Hillingdon Specialty GP training programme as well as an Associate Dean (AD). My roles as PD and AD are mostly to quality assure the training programmes in our sector. I feel privileged to be responsible for training future GPs which is both challenging and rewarding.

What does your role as the clinical governance lead entail?

In simple terms Clinical governance is a process through which NHS organisations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services and safe guarding high standards of care. It has many facets to it such as risk management, clinical effectiveness and Education & Training and continuous professional development, just to mention a few. Over the years the practice has endeavoured towards achieving those high goals and I hope patients have noticed a continuous improvement in the level & standard of services provided at GP Direct.

Background photo of Dr Gulamali receiving his Fellowship from Professor Field

How to manage coughs, colds, sore throats and the flu

With winter now upon us many of us will inevitably suffer from coughs, colds, sore throats and the flu. However these conditions for the most part are best treated with rest, fluids and over the counter medicines. If the symptoms persist for over a week it is advisable that you contact the Surgery. If your child has a fever for more than three days you should book them an appointment with a doctor.

It is also advisable that you have some basic medication at home such as Paracetamol, cough syrup, and Dioralyte. If you have young children it is recommended to have a thermometer at home to check their temperature and some Calpol/Baby Nurofen for high temperatures but always call the Surgery if you have any concerns about your child's health. It is important to remember that young children commonly get temperatures and other viral infections such as colds which for the most part are best treated with rest, fluids and over the counter medication which can alleviate their symptoms.

Antibiotics are rarely useful in the treatment of common colds, coughs, sore throats and fevers as these are almost always viral and therefore would not benefit from antibiotics. An excellent guide produced by the Department of General Practice at the University of Cardiff called **When should I worry – Your guide to Coughs, Colds, Earache and Sore Throats** gives useful advice about how to manage childhood infections and highlights the warning signs of more serious infections. The guide is available on our website (www.gpdirect.co.uk) under Practice policies. The guide is intended for children aged six months or over.

If you have prolonged symptoms for two weeks or more always consult with a doctor to rule out any serious underlying cause. We would also like to take this opportunity to remind all parents to ensure their children are fully up to date with all their vaccinations. It is noted that children over three years of age commonly stop responding to vaccination invite requests leaving them at greater risk of contracting serious illnesses like Measles.

Wrapping up Flu vaccinations for 2010

We are now coming to an end of our flu vaccinations for 2010. If you are at risk or aged over 65 please contact the Surgery as soon as possible to get your vaccination. At the time of going to print in early November we had completed all our walk-in clinics and vaccinated around 1,800 patients. Please contact the Surgery on 020 8515 9300 and ask for an appointment with a nurse to get your vaccination if you are aged over 65, are a carer or suffer from an underlying medical condition such as Diabetes, Asthma or Heart Disease.

Repeat Prescription requests reminder

Please leave a minimum of two working days for your repeat prescription requests to be issued. You must request your medication in writing, you can drop in the request in person by placing it in the repeat prescription request box placed on our reception desks, you can fax it on 020 8515 9310, use EMIS Access to request it online or send it by post to GP Direct, 3-7 Welbeck Road, Harrow, HA2 0RQ.

Keep warm this winter

With the cold weather now upon us we would like to remind our patients, especially those who are elderly or frail and the very young that it is important to stay warm this winter. By setting your heating to the right temperature (between 18–21°C or 64–70°F), you can still keep your home warm and lower your bills. If you feel cold at night, use a hot water bottle or electric blanket – but never use both together.

Major shake up in the commissioning of healthcare

Andrew Lansley, the Health Secretary announced major plans to radically shake up the commissioning of healthcare services within the NHS. In his White Paper which was released in July he announced plans to abolish PCTs and move the commissioning (i.e. the management of the NHS budget) over to GP groups. It is believed that GPs are better placed to make the right clinical decisions that are in the best interests of their patients as they have both the clinical knowledge and longstanding patient relationships.



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!

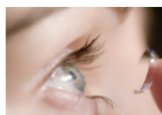
Let Shaftesbury Pharmacy know and this can be arranged.
Patient care is our priority.

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246 Northolt Road, South Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 8DU - UK
tel: 0208 423 5818, fax: 0208 248 6931, email: sales@familyeyecare.co.uk