

Keeping Well?

The Newsletter of the Nuffield Patient Group

Autumn 2018 Issue 22

Welcome!

Time for another issue of **Keeping Well?**

The lead article raises a most important issue about carers, who need our support just as much as those for whom we care (see this page).

Tim has furnished us with another lovely original cartoon on page 2, and page 3 is devoted to the Health Fair which took place in Witney just a few weeks ago. There was lots to see and do, and we all had a go on the smoothie bike. If you missed the event and didn't manage to measure your health score on the day, it's not too late. Just log on to <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou>.

News from the practice is on page 4, which also features your reminder to have a flu jab. There's another thing called the 'pneumo jab' that is also available for at-risk groups (page 5).

Finally, on page 6, Sarah Chapman brings us the latest evidence on the benefits of pelvic floor muscle training in women: yes, it works. Check out www.gussetgrippers.co.uk!

Talking makes me stronger

By Maria Dore

Just over a year ago my mum had a convulsive seizure, completely out of the blue, while falling asleep. Doctors couldn't understand why she had one but put it down to being "just one of those things", after all tests came back clear. Mum felt completely drained, and her muscles ached; doing daily tasks was a struggle. It took my mum several months to feel normal again, whatever normal is, and was just starting to get back to her old self. I was feeling alright at this point: managed to be strong for my mum and dad, and coped very well considering I didn't know what to do. Several days later, I got the bad news that a close friend had been diagnosed with leukaemia. This took me back and I began to feel lost as well as useless.

Life was just starting to get back to normal, my friend was getting better and his treatment was going well. Then my mum had two more seizures over several months. I could see that my mum's mental health (having history of anxiety) was getting worse and my dad was starting to



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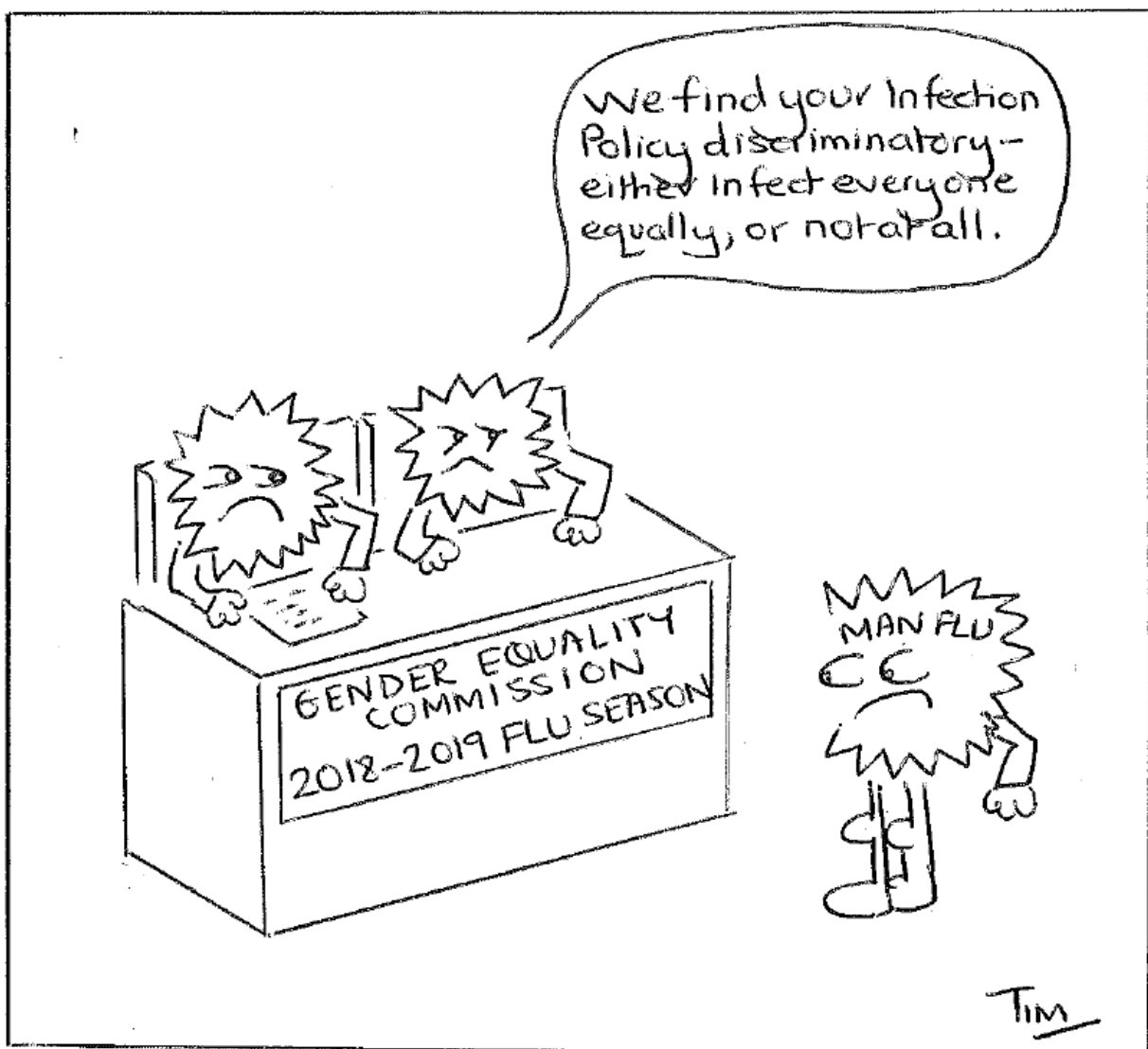
Continued from page 1

struggle. Her doctor diagnosed her with a rare form of epilepsy and prescribed her some medication. My mum found it hard to accept that this might be how it will be from now on. We were told that being on the medication would help prevent seizures in the future, but sadly it hasn't. Since her first one, she has had a total of seven, but recovery time has been reduced.

Seeing my mum in this state and trying to be her rock was hard. I found it very difficult to talk to her about how I felt and what was going on. Which in turn made my mum feel like I didn't care about her. She hated the fact she knew this was affecting me and my dad and that she couldn't make it go away. Some days I would come home to my mum in a state. It got to a point that it was

too much being the support for my mum and dad, and also my boyfriend, who was watching his best friend go through cancer. I started to struggle with both my home and work life, with some days coming to work crying.

I sought support through Oxfordshire Mind who suggested many useful resources including a 4-week wellbeing course. The course was fantastic, made me realize that talking is not all bad, in fact it can be a therapy. I started to be honest and open with myself, and to others, about how I was feeling. Over time I began to feel more confident and my social anxiety was slowly getting better. To this day, I am not 100% but every time I talk about what has happened and how I feel I get that little bit closer to who I was before it all started.



Tim Hughes

All the fun of the Health Fair!

By Graham Shelton

Did you make it to the Health and Wellbeing Fair at the Langdale Hall in Witney?

Our friends at the Public and Patient Partnership for West Oxfordshire (PPPWO) organized a free fun community event to help everyone to be as well as they can.

Thankfully, we learned that it's not about weightlifting or heroic diets but some of the simple things that we can all do a bit more of to keep ourselves well. There were stalls and activities on lots of topics for all the family, including:

- Intergenerational dancing (granddads and granddaughters, you were amazing!
- Facepainting
- Relaxation and wellbeing
- Blood pressure checks



- Advice on healthy eating
- Smoking cessation
- Drugs and alcohol
- Health walks
- Managing diabetes
- Dental health
- Living with dementia
- Family support
- Social prescribing.

It was quite a morning, with something for



everyone who wants to keep well. One thing I was particularly keen to try for myself was the OneYou health score (see <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou>). As expected I need to make a few changes in my life! Have a look on the web and see how you score.

The whole thing was great fun, but there were some good ideas to take away from the event for all the family. We were so pleased to have amazing participation and active involvement from some great organizations from the County and District Councils, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Citizens' Advice, Healthwatch and lots of patient groups, patient participation groups and local clubs.



It was the highlight of our year, so we were really pleased to see lots and lots of people at the event. We'd particularly like to thank Merlyn Mistry, Health Improvement Practitioner at the Public Health Team, Oxfordshire County Council who did all the donkey work of pulling this event together.

From the Practice

New Website

Take a look at our new website at www.thenuffieldpractice.co.uk

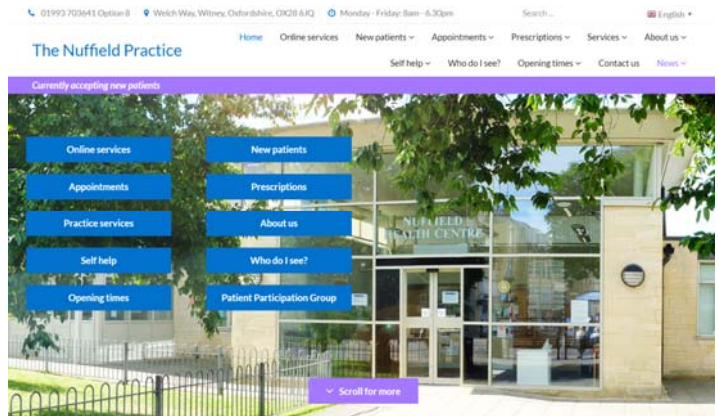
We have a fresh new look with easy to use navigation and a lovely new Home page photo by our colleague Anna Walsh, who is a keen amateur photographer. More photos will be added to break up the text in due course.

We hope that you will find it much easier to navigate, and that you will consider it a great source of information. If you have any feedback, please contact Catherine Simonini, Practice Manager and let her know.

Please make use of the Self Help link which is full of useful information and may mean that you do not need to contact the Practice. Our News tab

will have updated information about what is going on at the Practice, and there is also a live feed of Healthy Oxon which is run by Oxfordshire Public Health.

Thank you to the subcommittee of the PPG who gave up their time to be involved in the development of the website.



NHS Choices Feedback

We are trying to improve our online profile, and we would like your help in this.

If you have access to the internet and your own email address, we would be grateful for your feedback on the NHS Choices website: www.nhs.uk

Please open the Nuffield Practice page by typing our postcode; OX28 6JQ in the Find Local

Services box, by clicking on find a GP, or typing The Nuffield Practice into the search box at the top right hand side of the page.

When our page opens, please click on Rate it yourself (see below) or the Leave Review tab and you will be taken to the Feedback page.

It will take a few minutes of your time but we would really appreciate it.

Have you had your flu jab?

The Flu season is upon us again. If you fall into any of the categories below you are eligible for a flu jab, so please book an appointment at one of our flu clinics, or ask for the jab when you are seeing a GP or a Nurse for another matter:

- Aged 65+ years.



Any patient aged 6 months or above who suffers from any of the following:

- Chronic respiratory disease
- Chronic heart disease
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic liver disease
- Chronic neurological disease
- Diabetes
- Immunosuppression
- Pregnant women at any stage of their pregnancy
- People in long stay residential homes
- Carers
- Obese – BMI 40+

Due to the success of our Saturday clinics last year, we will be offering 2 again; 27th October and 10th November from 09.00 – 12.00.

Pneumococcal Vaccine

The pneumococcal vaccine protects against serious and potentially fatal pneumococcal infections. It's also known as the "pneumo jab" or pneumonia vaccine.

Pneumococcal infections are caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and can lead to pneumonia, septicaemia (a kind of blood poisoning) and meningitis. At their worst, they can cause permanent brain damage, or even kill.

Who should have the pneumococcal vaccine?

There are four groups of people who are advised to get vaccinated against pneumococcal infections:

- babies
- people aged 65 years and over
- anyone from the ages of 2 to 65 years with a long-term health condition
- anyone at occupational risk, such as welders.

Babies and the pneumococcal vaccine

Babies are routinely vaccinated with a type of pneumo jab known as the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) as part of their childhood vaccination programme. They have three injections, which are usually given at:

- 8 weeks old
- 16 weeks old
- One year old.

Adults aged 65 years or over and the pneumococcal vaccine

If you are 65 years or over, you will be offered a type of pneumo jab known as the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV). This one-off vaccination is very effective at protecting you against serious forms of pneumococcal infection.

People with long-term health problems and the pneumococcal vaccine

The PPV pneumo jab is available on the NHS for children and adults aged from 2 to 64 years old who are at a higher risk of developing a pneumococcal infection than the general population.

This is generally the same people who are eligible for annual flu vaccination. Children up to 5 years old may also need the PCV (because the PPV injection doesn't always work in young children).

You're considered to be at a higher risk of a pneumococcal infection if you have:

- had your spleen removed, or your spleen does not work properly
- a long-term respiratory disease, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- heart disease, such as congenital heart disease
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as liver cirrhosis
- diabetes
- a suppressed immune system caused by a health condition such as HIV
- a suppressed immune system caused by medication such as chemotherapy or steroid tablets
- a cochlear implant (a small hearing device fitted inside your ear)
- had cerebrospinal fluid (the clear fluid that surrounds the brain and spine) leaking from its usual position – this could be due to an accident or surgery

Adults and children over the age of five years who are severely immunocompromised (including anyone with leukaemia; multiple myeloma; genetic disorders affecting the immune system or after a bone marrow transplant) usually have a single dose of PCV followed by PPV.

Welders and metal workers and the pneumococcal vaccine

Some people with an occupational risk are advised to have the pneumococcal vaccine, including those who work with metal fumes, such as welders.

If you think you may be eligible for the jab, please ask at Reception at the Nuffield Practice for confirmation.

Why not consider having your pneumo jab at the same time as your flu jab?

Evidence Matters

by Sarah Chapman

I work for Cochrane UK, the UK hub of an international network of people working together to help people make informed decisions about health care. It does this through doing systematic reviews, which bring together the results of clinical trials to answer questions about what helps or harms in health care.

Urinary incontinence in women: the evidence for pelvic floor exercises

Looking at the way incontinence products are marketed, especially to women, we could be forgiven for thinking that once we've had a baby or are on the far side of the menopause leaking urine is normal, unavoidable and untreatable – just one of those things, right? Wrong! But urinary incontinence IS very common, estimated to affect 25% to 45% of women (and it could be higher – many women never admit to the problem or seek help), peaking around midlife, which coincides with the menopause, and then rising steadily again from the age of about 70.

Almost half the women who leak urine have stress urinary incontinence (SUI). This happens when you exert yourself; it's the kind that might stop you joining your child on a trampoline, cause you problems at the gym, or catch you out when you laugh or sneeze. Less common is urgency urinary incontinence (UUI), in which leaking urine follows a sudden urge to 'go'. Some women have both, and this is known as mixed urinary incontinence (MUI).

Some of us will have been told by midwives that exercising our pelvic floor muscles, by tensing and relaxing them, is A Good Thing, but most of us won't have done them, either in the sleep-deprived weeks with our new babies or later on.

Chinese Taoists have been using pelvic floor muscle training (PFMT) for over 6000 years,

while we only caught onto this in the UK in the last century. So what evidence do we have about how well it works?

The latest evidence on PFMT

Cochrane Reviews are regularly updated to take account of new research, and the Cochrane Review looking at PFMT for urinary incontinence in women has just been updated with 10 new studies, giving us evidence from 31 studies involving almost 2000 women, most of whom had stress urinary incontinence.

The news is good, with high and moderate quality evidence available, such that the review authors were able to conclude:

“We can be confident that PFMT can cure or improve symptoms of SUI and all other types of UI [urinary incontinence]”.

Compared with women who had no treatment, or an inactive treatment, women with SUI who did PFMT were eight times more likely to report that they were cured, while women with any type of urinary incontinence were five times more likely. Women who did PFMT were also more likely to report better quality of life and to have less urine leakage and less often. They were more satisfied with the active treatment and their sexual outcomes were better.

It isn't yet clear whether the benefits are long-lasting if you stop doing them.

For 'everything you wanted to know but were too afraid to ask about pelvic floors, pelvic ceilings and all things undercarriage related' check out Gusset Grippers, also known as Elaine Miller – a specialist physiotherapist and stand-up comic who shares evidence-based information with lots of humour at www.gussetgrippers.co.uk.

You can see the review in full at www.thecochranelibrary.com.

Dumoulin C, Cacciari LP, Hay-Smith EJC. Pelvic floor muscle training versus no treatment, or inactive control treatments, for urinary incontinence in women. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2018, Issue 10. Art. No.: CD005654. DOI:10.1002/14651858.CD005654.pub4.

For further information about this newsletter, please contact:

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You can access these articles at www.thenuffieldpractice.co.uk

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