

Welcome to issue 18 of the OH&S newsletter – **Christmas edition 2004.**

2004 has not been a particularly easy year for GPs and their Practice staff with the introduction of the new contract and now QOF visits. (See article below)

We have noticed these increasing pressures and are keen to be able to respond with prompt and appropriate support.

With that in mind we would like to remind **GPs and all other Practice staff** that we have a network of independent **counsellors and psychotherapists** throughout S&W Devon and Cornwall to whom we can refer.

If you feel that you would benefit from a course of counselling or psychotherapy support please contact the Service in complete confidence. Contact details at the end of this newsletter.

If you have a colleague who you feel could benefit – please tell him/her about us.

In your Surgery, when the alarms go off during the night or at weekends who is the muggins that gets called out?



Not only does it disturb your weekend or sleep, it does seem daft for a single doctor or member of staff to go into a dark, empty surgery in the middle of the night.

An alternative is to use a security firm.

For an individual surgery the cost of this service is in the region of £120 per year and £25 per hour call out charge. This would be much cheaper if a contract was in place on behalf of many surgeries.

We at the OH Service would be happy to collate interest and negotiate a contract on your behalf working with Devon and Cornwall LMCs.

If you are interested please email our administrator Sharon Trevarthen –
Sharon@abbottburke.co.uk





FLU Vac time – oh no!!!!

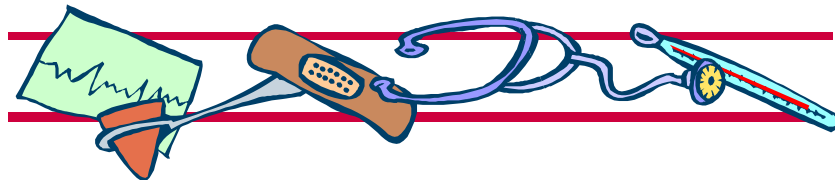


Here at OH we notice the increased number of needlestick incidents that are reported to us during this period. We know the clinics are extremely busy and the additional pressure perhaps contributes to mistakes being made.

So now is a good time to repeat the following bits of advice concerning your own personal safety,

- Put sharps boxes near to you so that used syringes can be dropped straight in
- Make sure that bins are changed when 2/3rds full and always have a new bin ready and waiting for use.

If you DO sustain a needlestick injury contact us immediately and we will help you to take the appropriate action. See Section 2.4 of our Occupational Health & Safety Manual – we provided every Practice with an extra copy so that one could be kept in the treatment room.



Dogs and cats – the new stress-buster

Yes its true – a 5 minute interaction with your cat or dog achieves the same amount of stress reduction than a 20 minute break – and that was research undertaken on doctors!!(10th International Conf. on Human-Animal Interactions, Glasgow, Nov 04)

But what do they mean by 'interaction'? Yes we've all known for years that playing catch with Rover gives you a feel-good factor, but we're not so sure about the effect of the decapitated mouse left by Tinkerbell on the doormat.

It would certainly help the prescribing budget;
"Yes Mrs Flusymptoms, just go home and pet your dog three times daily. You'll be right as rain by tomorrow"





Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service

ACAS

ACAS is an independent organisation that aims to improve organisations and working life through better employment relations.

We have found much of their literature and training material extremely useful and very readable. To this end we have reproduced one article (see below) that seems to us to make sense within a Practice environment.

ACAS have an excellent website; www.acas.org.uk, and they put on regular training courses designed to assist managers of small businesses like GP Practices.

For example;

- Dealing with bullying and harassment in the workplace
- Managing discipline and grievance at work
- Contracts of employment and the written statement.

And others - these are generally a half-day and charged at cost price.

For more information contact us (details back page) or go to ACAS direct on 0117 9469519 (SW Office)

Effective workplaces - the Acas model

All our services aim to make workplaces more effective - from good practice advice and training to our in-depth projects with individual organisations. But what does an effective workplace look like? Using our unique practical experience we have developed an Acas model. Typically effective workplaces will have at least some of the following:

- Ambitions, goals and plans that employees are familiar with and understand.
- Managers who genuinely listen to and consider their employees' views so everyone is actively involved in making important decisions.
- People who feel valued so they can talk confidently about their work and learn from both successes and mistakes.
- Everyone treated fairly and valued for their differences.
- Work organisation that encourages initiative, innovation and people working together.
- An understanding that people have interests and responsibilities outside work so they can openly discuss ways of working that suit personal needs and the needs of the business.
- A pay and reward system that is clear, fair and consistent.
- A safe and healthy place to work.
- As much employment security as possible.
- A culture where everybody is encouraged to learn new skills so that they can look forward to further employment either in their present workplace or elsewhere.
- A good working relationship between management and employee representatives that in turn helps build trust throughout the business.
- Procedures for dealing with disciplinary matters, grievances and disputes that managers and employees know about and use fairly.





QOF and Hepatitis B immunisation of staff

We have had many calls recently querying this aspect of the new contract indicators – so read on for clarification;

The wording of 'Management Indicator 3' is:

The Hepatitis B status of all doctors and relevant practice-employed staff is recorded and immunisation recommended if required in accordance with national guidance".

If you follow Section 1.4 of our Manual this gives guidelines on establishing a system that will help you to comply with the QOF requirements.

We have had quite a few queries lately regarding the need for clinical staff to produce evidence of immunity to Hep B to meet the requirements of QOF assessment teams.

For staff undertaking Exposure Prone Procedures (EPPs) there is a requirement (as distinct from a recommendation) regarding hepatitis B. The requirement is for freedom from Infection (i.e. surface antigen negative). This is usually assumed if an individual is Antibody Positive following a course of Hepatitis B immunisation.

These staff are required to produce documentation of either immunity or freedom from infection.

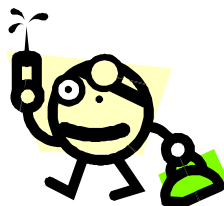
Those of you who have lost or mislaid your proof of immunity can meet the requirements by having a sample of blood tested for Hep B Surface Antigen. Just having repeat Antibody levels tested may not necessarily show immunity as levels drop naturally over a time period even though the body retains it's immunological memory.

It is also unnecessary (and unadvisable) to have a booster dose of Hepatitis B vaccine followed by serology, as again results may not confirm immunity.

If you are a 'True non responder' to Hepatitis B immunisation, then again serology for Hepatitis B Surface Antigen and where necessary Hep B markers will demonstrate your freedom from infection. Should serology results prove otherwise then you should seek Occupational Health advice without delay.

For staff who are NOT undertaking EPPs, there is no mandatory requirement to have Hepatitis B immunisation and therefore documentary evidence of freedom from infection is not required. The requirement to undertake risk assessment, advise staff of the risks and provide immunisation for those who wish to proceed is, of course, obligatory.

This subject is complicated and always subject to change because it is at the forefront of immunological research. If you still have queries please do not hesitate to contact us. Contact details on the back page.





Health & Safety Training for Managers

As many of you will already be aware, we have been running training designed specifically to support and assist those of you with delegated responsibility for health & safety in GP Practices.

Thus far the training has gone down very well and we will therefore be arranging further courses for the New Year, both in S&W Devon and Cornwall.

The course is run by an ex Inspector from the Health & Safety Executive – nothing like getting it from the horse's mouth!!

It lasts for 2 days, costs £135 and covers;

- Why and how to manage health & safety
- What needs to be shown to be managed – i.e. what to bother to write down

But don't take it from us! Here is the feedback received from

Melvin White, Practice Manager at Bere Alston Surgery

who recently completed the course:

HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR PRACTICE MANAGERS



"Health and Safety - well it all looks "safe" to me and we are only a GP Practice". Words which left a lasting impression especially as I had only just joined a practice and had experienced the need for comprehensive Health and Safety management during past employment. Time to get up to date and find out what was around the corner.

Having previously sat through many H&SAW sessions, many of which were never focussed or easily understood, I enrolled for the 2 day Health and Safety Course for Practice Managers feeling a little uneasy and expecting to be inundated with a plethora of regulations and not much practical help. Not so - the course was extremely well structured with minimal emphasis on regulations and more importantly included the opportunity to interact with other practice managers during several workshop sessions.

I now feel that there is an opportunity to review my Health and Safety Policy, audit and working practices in an "informed" manner and be able to pick up on the areas of most concern having been expertly guided through the minefield of responsibilities, which affect us all.



Contact details	
☎	0117 923 2381 any Wednesday from 9:00am – 5.00pm
7	You can fax us at any time on: 0117 923 2382 or 01530 224 762
💻	You can email us at any time at: sue@abbottburke.co.uk lesley@abbottburke.co.uk or ellen@abbottburke.co.uk
📄	Sue Burke/Lesley Abbott postal address: 33 Logan Road, Bishopston, Bristol, BS7 8DS
✉	Ellen Cole can be contacted via Occupational Health for Primary Care, Room 310, Tamar Science Park, 1 Davy Road, Derriford, Plymouth, PL6 8BX Tel: 01752 762116 Fax: 01752 762117

And finally.....

**A very merry Christmas
and happy and successful
New Year to you all.**

