

Update from the Surgery – February 2023

We have had a bit of distraction by a Care Quality Commission inspection that has been going on since their visit to the surgery in August. It has been a painfully drawn-out process and having heard nothing for months received our report this month. We were nominated for "outstanding" in Care, Responsiveness and Well-led; however the panel decided that there was not enough evidence on their spreadsheet so have awarded a "good" overall. The summary comment is: "Patients were respected and valued as individuals and were empowered as partners in their care, practically and emotionally, by an exceptional and distinctive service."

I guess that we can't be happier with a comment that summarises what we set out to do at the start of every day. I was disappointed by the panel's decision but after a bit of soul searching, I realised that the main reason for the CQC's existence is to highlight unsafe care and implement changes. I am very grateful for the time taken by the patients that spoke to the inspector and the members of the Patient Participation Group that gave up their time to talk to the inspector so passionately about the surgery.

And so we go on... At the end of February there was a launch about Bowel Cancer Screening. You might have seen some adverts on TV with the national treasure Alan Titchmarsh, promoting screening. Bowel cancer is still a leading cancer with nearly 43,000 new cases a year and nearly 17,000 deaths a year. The good news is that over half the people survive more than 10 years.

Over half of bowel cancers are thought to be preventable as contributed to by eating too much processed meat, obesity, alcohol, smoking, not exercising and not eating enough fibre. Some cases are more genetic so your risk is increased if a very close relative has had it under the age of 50 or if 2 close relatives have had it at any age.

The NHS has a screening program for those aged between 60 and 74 years old. You basically put a bit of your poo-on-a-stick and post it back to try and detect old blood released from a tumor in your bowel. There are other reasons for blood other than cancer so further tests are needed to find out why blood might be present. The screening is slowly being rolled out to those between 50 and 74 years old. If you are over 75 you can ask for a test every 2 years by phoning 0800 707 60 60.

Sadly, bowel cancer can affect all ages and whatever age you are and even if you have had recent screening please seek advice if you have had a change in bowel habit (usually runnier) for more than a month, rectal bleeding (especially if mixed in with the stool), pain/bloating/weight loss.

March celebrates national Down's Syndrome day on 21st (Down's is characterised by 3 number 21 chromosomes) and there are some local charities to support such as "21 Together". The month also celebrates Ovarian cancer awareness - perhaps one for next newsletter. In the meantime, nurse Sarah and myself are trying to do some TikToks to promote cervical screening so watch out for those if we manage to keep a straight face in front of a camera.

With best wishes to all of you from the Surgery - Jack Hickey, GP