

Weekly update from the Surgery

Just as I think of making this a fortnightly update something always happens... We had news that Denmark is not giving the Astra Zeneca (Oxford) vaccine due to concerns about blood clots which has raised a few concerns. So far there is no such evidence in the UK and we will continue to use it. We have a relatively small patient number of about 4300 so a few cases of any condition make a big impact on our surgery. We have been aware of an higher number of blood clots before we started vaccinating and also after people have had Covid but nothing that we can relate to the vaccine itself.

There is a reporting system in place in the UK called "the yellow card" which is very simply a yellow card that we fill in and submit to the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency in the event that someone develops a serious adverse effect from a medication. Although the cards still exist there is thankfully an online version too. We would complete this for vaccines so if anyone does suffer a significant adverse reaction please do tell us. So far though it seems that Covid poses a much greater risk of blood clots than any of the vaccines and perhaps the lockdown has reduced people's exercise levels and increased the risk so please get out and enjoy the beautiful surroundings. Getting out is also a chance to get a bit more Vitamin D (from the sun) which has been recommended to increase our immune defenses. In the meantime please keep engaged with the vaccination effort and in time to come we might be able to get "out out"...

As I drove back from Charing yesterday I was diverted by a Police cordon which was very sobering. Having grown up near Clapham I was loosely following the news that Sarah Everard was missing and I can't really fathom what has potentially happened. Although it would appear that this was an isolated event it was topical that last week at a Safeguarding meeting it was revealed that 137 women were murdered by their partners (femicide) last year. Surprisingly to me one third of them had contact with their GP in the preceding 24 hours although the reason for the contact wasn't revealed but seems like a missed opportunity.

As we are preparing for some normality to resume we have looked at ways to improve our service at the surgery. We are certainly likely to do more over the phone than we did previously and have considered some online methods after experiencing parents' evening recently. Although technology feels really tempting we really enjoy the human contact and have reflected on the number of times a consultation developed from a "door-handle" comment on the way out. I'm not sure if any of those 137 women would have been able to reach out differently on a timed zoom call but hopefully a face-to-face approach gives everyone the best opportunity to address any concerns.

Please feel free to politely make any suggestions to the team how you would like to see the surgery develop out of lockdown. Changing the NHS is a bit like turning an oil tanker but this feels like a chance for change so we are excited to get the opportunity and want your help with this - kmccg.woodchurchsurgery@nhs.net .

In a week that has celebrated women on International Women's Day there are lots of positive messages which hopefully go some way to balance the tragic event of Sarah Everard but highlights that these things can happen close to home. If you, or anyone you know is effected by domestic violence please take the first step and reach out. The journey may feel overwhelming but has to start somewhere so why not with your GP or practice nurse?

The children are back at school which has been a great boost in my own home. The value of children being with other children is huge and they have a chance to play together again. That I saw my first child "playing injury" in a year this week is just ridiculous and shows how restricted they have been. The sunflowers are growing well as are the lovely planters at the surgery. Spring is coming!

Best wishes on behalf of the Surgery

Jack Hickey - GP