

The shape of things to come?

by Enid Segall

The Government reshuffle has put Stephen Dorrell back at the Department of Health, this time as Secretary of State replacing Mrs Virginia Bottomley. When he was there last as the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health some three years ago, he allowed what has since been called by some as "the Dorrell breakthrough". He stated that a non medically qualified practitioner could work in an NHS GP practice providing the GP retained overall responsibility for the patient's health.

This has led to a number of initiatives country wide. At a recent meeting of the Parliamentary Group for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Dr Elizabeth Christie and homoeopath Mr Andrew Ward, RSHom gave a presentation on their experience of setting up a pilot project - how it operates and the protocol with regard to referral at the St. Margaret Surgery, Bradford on Avon.

The Set up

Dr Christie explained that hers was a two woman practice. She and her partner had trained together and thought along the same lines. They had both attended one day courses on homoeopathy at the Faculty which has convinced them of its enormous value but in a busy practice with 3000 patients to care for neither of them had the time to dedicate to studying for the Faculty's Membership examination. However, they felt homoeopathy would benefit patients with conditions that they knew would not respond sufficiently to drug therapy. They decided to seek funding for a homoeopath to work within their practice.

They agreed a strict protocol with Mr Ward as to who would and would not be referred to him. It was decided that he would concentrate on chronic conditions not well served by conventional medicine like eczema and other skin conditions, migraine and IBS. A detailed information sheet was prepared for patients and Dr Christie felt that the project had been successful with high patient satisfaction. The waiting time for appointments was 2-3 weeks,

funding had come from Wiltshire FHSA for two sessions a week for 18 months.

Disadvantages

Dr Christie listed the following as disadvantages:

- 1) It was time consuming. One and a half hours was allowed for the first appointments for adults. One hour for children. No limit was set for the number of 30 minute follow up appointments.
- 2) Patients needed to "open up". For people not accustomed to homoeopathy, a long interview with a homoeopath could be daunting and some patients found it difficult to confide in anyone.
- 3) There was great disappointment if the treatment failed. This sometimes happened because they had not been able to open up sufficiently or because they had long standing chronic conditions which did not respond.
- 4) Some patients who experienced a reaction to the prescribed remedy found it unacceptable.

Strengths

- 1) Dr Christie felt that their ability to offer a quick referral was a definite advantage as was a short time (4 weeks) to a follow up appointment.
- 2) No confidentiality problems.
- 3) Good co-ordination of care with GP back up available to the homoeopath.
- 4) It broadened the GP's perspective while it encouraged the patient to seek help other than from the GP.

Dr Christie stated her belief that there was now a need for a cultural shift in GP attitudes and she hoped to see homoeopathy as part of GP training.

The Homeopath

Andrew Ward gave a detailed presentation of the 42 conditions he had treated in 160 patients referred to him. Of these 105 had been

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discharged and 55 were ongoing. Part of the audit had been a patient satisfaction survey which showed a 90% satisfaction rate. Patients were very enthusiastic and relieved to be registered with a practice where the GPs were prepared to discuss the limits of conventional medicine. Other GPs in the area had been sceptical at first but were now changing attitude as they saw the results. The success rate had been between 50 % and 60% .

Funding

As always funding was a worry and it was hoped that the money to fund his clinic would not be stopped. They hoped to carry out a cost efficiency study in the future and expand the service to include the treatment of acute conditions. *BHA*

Christmas Gifts



Gift Membership Form

Just fill in the form below and send it with your remittance to the BHA.

NAME OF RECIPIENT _____

ADDRESS _____

YOUR MESSAGE _____

GOOD NEWS – WELL SORT OF – UMMM – NO ACTUALLY

Inland Revenue relents and allows tax relief on homoeopathic consultations for over sixties with Private Health Insurance but there's a catch.

When the Chancellor gave tax relief to over sixties with Private Health Insurance, homoeopathic consultations were excluded. At the time the BHA protested and corresponded with the Inland Revenue on behalf of members.

Pressure has been building and at long last the Inland Revenue has yielded, having taken further advice from the Department of Health. They now draw a distinction between medical homoeopathy and "other homoeopathy" and being aware that in the past 5 years medical homoeopathy has been provided more often free under the NHS than otherwise in the UK, they take the view that **medical homoeopathy may now be treated as an approved benefit for private medical insurance relief.**

However, at the moment it is restricted to private patients in a hospital and may only be offered as hospital treatment. Homoeopathic treatment offered in surgeries, clinics or consulting rooms may not be included in a private medical insurance contract which is eligible for tax relief. Needless to say that legal advice has been sought on this by the Faculty of Homoeopathy and the hospital restriction has been queried as it does not apply to other treatments. Given that the five homoeopathic hospitals are NHS hospitals, it is just plain daft. We will keep you informed. **Enid Segall.**

BHA

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

The North Cotswold Homoeopathic Group

Meetings held at Winchcombe Library, Winchcombe, Glos.

25 October)

22 November) Both months feature a series of teach-ins by Mr Kenneth Derrick

For further information: 01242-621-281.

Bromley Homoeopathic Group

All meetings are held at St Peter's and St Paul's Church Rooms, Bromley (behind Allders)

Start at 7.30pm for 8.00pm and finish at 10pm.

Free to members. £1.00 to non-members.

2 October: Dr Brian Kaplan

20 November: Christmas Bazaar. Guest Dr Anne Wynne-Simmons

For further information: Jane Gilchrist, Secretary on 0181-290-1721.

Okehampton & District Homoeopathic Group

Meetings to be held the third Thursday of the month at the Riverside Centre, Castle Hospital, Okehampton

Oct 19th: 7.30pm.]subject to be confirmed

Nov 23rd: 7.30pm]subject to be confirmed.

Dec: No meeting.

For further information: Mr Arthur Sturton 01837-53096.

Caterham Homoeopathic Group

Meetings to be held on the third Thursday of each month, St Mary's Church Hall, Church Hill,

Caterham-7.45 for 8.00pm.

16 Nov.

For further information: 01883-346-817.

The North London Homoeopathic Group.

Meetings are held on the third Monday of the month at 7.30pm at St Stephens Church Hall at the corner of Village Road and Park Avenue, Enfield.

October 16th: Hannah Shine: The Bach Flower Remedies

For further information: 0181-455-2107 ask for Sam Needleman.

Epsom and Leatherhead Homoeopathy & Healing Group

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at the St John's Ambulance Hall, Hook Road, Epsom.

Annual Subscription £6 (couples:£8, Unwaged £4) Admission £2 for non-members.

For further information: Leane Salaman 01372-278-4298.

South East Essex Homoeopathic Group

All meetings take place on the 2nd Tuesday in the month, in Swans Green Hall, Hart Road, Thundersley, Essex. Doors open at 7.15pm. All are welcome.

October 10th: The remedy *Lachesis* by Pam Linn. HRT and Osteoporosis in General by Jim John

November 14th: The remedy *Lycopodium* by Ann Kingsbury. Digestion Problems by David Fostick

December: No meeting. Next meeting Jan 9th, 1996.

For further information tel/fax: 01268-753-544 ask for Len Littlejohn A No. 1 bus from Rayleigh Station will drop you outside the Hall. A simple map giving road directions is available on request.

The Devon Homoeopathic Group - Note the day is Tuesday

Meetings are held on the third **TUESDAY** of each month. The Meetings are always friendly and informal and non-members are most welcome!

Refreshments and 'Question Time' follow the talks and a wide range of books is always available.

17th October: Remedies for Acute Anxieties and *Silica*.

21st November: Basic Principles and how to choose a remedy.

For further information: 01364-731-49 ask for Anne Ellison. Or write to Jenny Rainbow, 'Linden Lea,' Shaldon Road, Combe-in-Teignhead, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 4RR.

The Fife Homoeopathic Group

Will meet at the Muiredge Surgery, Merlin Crescent, Buckhaven, Fife. Please contact the secretary on the following number.

For further information: 01592-715502.

The Pinner and District Homoeopathic Group.

Meetings are held at Friends Meeting House, 456 Rayners Lane, Harrow.

For further information: 0181-429-3724.

East Dorset Homoeopathic Group

Please note: The Group has changed Halls from Wimborne Memorial Hall to:

St Catherine's Church Hall, Llewens Lane, Wimborne, Dorset.

Meetings are held every second Tuesday of the month except January and August. The Group has a selection of books and tapes from the Guildford group.

North London Irritable Bowel Syndrome Group

at The Parlour, The Bourne Methodist Church, The Bourne, London N14. All meetings are in the 'Luther Hall' except in May and November when it is held in the 'Augustine Hall'.

Everybody welcome. Meetings held every 4th Tuesday evening.

31 October: Mrs Lisa MacGechan on Aromatherapy.

28 November: Mrs Julian Wright - Medical Herbalist.

Fee £1.50 to cover tea, refreshments and hall charge.

For further information: Dr Allen on 0181-441-2704 or Mrs Badley on 081-441-7876.