

# Dalkeith Homoeopathic Clinic: the First Year

by Dr PF Hannaford MBChB, MRCGP, MFHom, DRCOG, DCH

Readers of 'Homoeopathy' will remember our reporting of the Lothian clinic's launch in February last year and details of its subsequent popularity and success in our October journal. Now Dr Hannaford has provided an analysis of the clinic's first year for us. She has divided the report into sections including referral statistics, clinical procedures and future plans of the clinic.

## 1. Introduction

The clinic commenced on 28th February 1994, initially as an eight month pilot study jointly funded by the Lothian Homoeopathic Group and the East and Midlothian Unit of Lothian Health, later to become the East and Midlothian NHS Trust.\* It is run as an outreach clinic of the Medical Directorate and sited in the community health unit at Dalkeith Medical Centre. The Clinic has been staffed by a Locum Consultant in Homoeopathic Medicine providing two consulting sessions per week, with part-time secretarial support and the use of a receptionist during normal working hours to deal with enquiries. Patients are seen by referral only, homoeopathic prescriptions being either dispensed at the clinic or supplied at dispensing outside pharmacies.

At the end of the pilot study the clinic continued as before, but now being funded by Lothian Health.

The clinic has been well-received by GP's, many of whom have commented in their referral letters that they are pleased to find the service available locally. It has attracted many enquiries from patients. No formal or informal complaints have been received during the year except regarding the length of the waiting list.

## 2. Referral statistics

Total patients referred to date: 432

Adults: 362                      Children under 16: 70

Of these:            133 have been seen and 48 of these discharged.

13 have opted for private treatment to avoid waiting.

12 have declined, cancelled, or failed to attend.

3 are on the waiting list for the Glasgow Homoeopathic Hospital also.

3 required advice only.

In all, so far, 223 of all GP's in Lothian have made referrals, ie 41%

and 100 of all practices in Lothian have made referrals, ie 67%

Referrals have the following geographical spread:

Edinburgh	206	46%
Midlothian	121	28%
East Lothian	62	14%
West Lothian	25	6%
Borders	12	3%
Fife	5	1%
Central Region	1	<1%

All referrals are from GP's except two from hospital consultants and three requests for transfer from Glasgow Homoeopathic Hospital Out-Patients because of severe travelling difficulties.

## 3. Waiting list

There are 275 patients on the waiting list of whom 64 are classified as urgent/early and the rest routine.

In view of the numbers referred, patients in the routine category are not being seen at all now and the longest time spent on the waiting list so far is 52 weeks. The current waiting list for an early referral coming in now is about 30 weeks. For really urgent referrals the earliest appointment is 7 weeks.

*continued over ...*

continued from page 65

The patients on the waiting list are from the following areas:

Edinburgh	135
Midlothian	72
East Lothian	39
West Lothian	16
Borders	9
Fife	3

#### 4. Clinic procedures and audit

All referrals from GP's are acknowledged. Patients are sent a letter within two weeks to say that the referral has been received and to warn of the likely wait. Appointments for new patients are sent out 4-6 weeks ahead and must be confirmed by the patient. New patients are sent clinic information, a map and a questionnaire.

Data is collected for audit after every patient contact.

In addition an assessment of referrals by post-code area and population density has been undertaken and shown a clear tendency for local practices to make more use of the facility and for areas from which travel is awkward such as West Lothian and North Edinburgh to make little use.

A survey of time spent in the waiting room was carried out over a three month period with the following results:

Waiting time from appointment or arrival (whichever being later) was:

0-5 minutes	72%
6-10 minutes	19%
11-15 minutes	5%
16-20 minutes	5%

showing that the times allocated for consultations were adequate to avoid undue waits.

**DID NOT ATTEND** rates were 4% for first appointments and 10% for review appointments.

An initial assessment (assessed by clinic doctor) of the first forty discharged patients gave the following results for **outcome**:

Cured or much improved	=	45%
Improved	=	17%

No change	=	10%
Worse	=	0
No data available	=	25%

only one visit required	=	5
not suitable for treatment	=	2
declined further treatment	=	2
moved away	=	1

Prescribing costs: For the first 250 patients the estimated average cost of homoeopathic medicines and containers was 96 pence per patient.

Additional activities: a small number of investigations has been ordered, mainly for bacteriology and basic blood tests. One patient has been referred on for in-patient assessment to the Glasgow Homoeopathic Hospital.

#### 5. Current activities and future plans

In addition to seeing patients the clinic has obtained a grant from the Scottish Homoeopathic Research and Education Trust to enable a study of outcomes to be undertaken, including an assessment of use of health service resources and consumptions of medicines before and after treatment. They are also intending to assess patient and GP satisfaction with the treatment provided.

A third year medical student will be undertaking a Special Study Project relating to the work of the clinic later in the year.



# Freeman's

GLASGOW • SCOTLAND

Wholesalers and Retailers of  
Homoeopathic Preparations

Postal & Telephone  
Orders by Return

7 Eaglesham Road, Clarkston, Glasgow G76 7BU  
Tel: 041-644 1165 (Orders) 041-644 4640 (Dispensary)  
24 hr Ansaphone Service

continued from page 66 ...

The clinic has thus far proved popular with referrers and patients, effective and economic to run, but is overwhelmed and unable to meet acceptable waiting list times. In addition, a number of patients have found difficulty getting to Dalkeith and some have discontinued attending as a result.

This clinic has also acted as a focus for enquiries about homoeopathy, contacts from researchers and communications with the various local medical committees. Opportunity has been provided for interested doctors and medical students to sit in as observers. Regular management group meetings are held which include links with other users of the centre and patients' representatives. A considerable amount of administrative work has been generated which was not initially anticipated or provided for and it will be necessary in future to allow for this aspect in the development of the service.

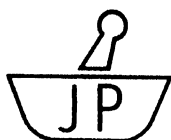
Obviously it would be desirable to develop homoeopathic out-patient provision in other parts of the region in addition. It is clear from the numbers referred from each area that the present level of demand from Midlothian alone could be met from the existing provision, but to cover Edinburgh and East Lothian would

require a further four sessions per week and West Lothian probably less than one, unless a number of patients transferred from their current attendance at Glasgow.

For the future it is to be hoped that the manifest demand for the service can be recognised with enhanced provision and that the clinic can provide a focus for research and for assessment into how best to integrate homoeopathy into other medical services. It is already available as an option to those GP's who have chosen to undertake study in the subject and should equally be available at a specialist level. The ultimate goal is seen as providing the most clinically effective, cost-effective and appropriate treatment for individual patients with homoeopathy as one option in the full range of general medical services.

\*The BHA gave generous help for the pilot study.

BHA



## JOLLEYS PHARMACY

**Homoeopathic & Allopathic  
Dispensing**

POSTAL & TELEPHONE  
ORDERS BY RETURN

36 WITTON STREET  
NORTHWICH  
CHESHIRE CW9 5AH  
Tel: (01606) 331552

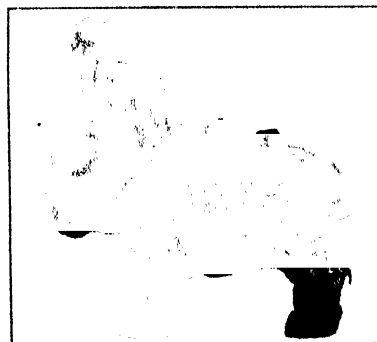
104 WITTON STREET  
NORTHWICH  
CHESHIRE CW9 5AB  
Tel: (01606) 42663

## **DON'T FORGET . . . RAYSTEDE CENTRE FOR ANIMAL RESCUE AT RINGMER**

Opening of the  
Homoeopathic Display Centre  
on August 12th at 2.30pm.

It will be a wonderful day out.

See page 67 for details.



---

## Fund Raising Initiative from the Okehampton & District Group

---

To help raise funds for their clinic The Okehampton & District Group is organising a grand draw for a beautiful handmade quilt which has been very generously donated by Mrs Jenny Hutchison of Strawberry Fayre Patchwork Supplies, Chagford.

The doublesize patchwork applique quilt has been handmade by 18 quilters in all who started work last November. It has a cream background in 30 flower shaped panels in sweet pea colours - Pinks, blues, greens and cream.



The quilt will be on show at the following events: The Health Fair, Charter Hall, Okehampton June 8th, 10 am - 4 pm. Also at the Official Opening of the Homoeopathic Clinic at the Castle Hospital, Riverside Centre, Okehampton on Thursday, June 22nd at 10am.

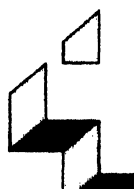
The clinic opened its doors in March and is already fully booked until August. GP referrals are welcomed together with self referral. Appointments Tel: 01837 52231

9am - 5 pm. Monday - Friday only. It is hoped to extend the Clinic from its current one day per month to two days per month, should sufficient funds be raised from the quilt draw. (The BHA has made a grant of £1000 towards the new clinic). Tickets are on sale in shops, inns and hotels in and around Okehampton, and at the BHA in London.

Information on tickets can be obtained by telephoning Arthur Sturton on 01837 53096. *BHA*



*Arthur and Anita Sturton, the force behind the Okehampton & District Group's Fundraising effort.*



# Nelsons

## Homoeopathic Pharmacy

73 Duke Street, Grosvenor Square,  
London W1M 6BY  
Telephone 0171-629 3118