

Patient Participation Group - News Sheet No.3

Since January, 2015 there has been a Friends and Family Survey run nationally. Since that date all patients from the Saddleworth Practice have had the opportunity for to recommend the Practice to friends and family if the most recent treatment was thought to have been sufficient to justify a such a response. Most recently a member of your Patient Participation Group has assisted in analysing the data.

Within the context of the survey there has been an expectation patients would make negative comments as appropriate. As expected the greatest source of complaint about the Practice surrounds the inability of patients to get a prompt appointment. It is appreciated fully this is most frustrating to all concerned.

Despite the attraction of working in Saddleworth, the Practice has been unsuccessful in trying to recruit a full time GP. The pursuit of more staff will continue but in the meantime we have to look at what patients can do to help the situation.

In the recent months the Practice has recruited a Community Pharmacist, Ian Coleman, who can give advice on minor ailments and from February he will be able to independently prescribe for minor ailments. Similarly the Practice has appointed a Community Matron, Sarah Hince, whose role is to look after, primarily, patients who are over 75 and have long term conditions. Sarah is able to prescribe and both posts have resulted in a release of G.Ps time.

I am sure we would all agree a G.P's time is best used if emergencies are seen swiftly. It has to be acknowledged that on occasions minor ailments can regress into something highly significant and injurious to health. Nonetheless, there are times when the time of a G.P. could have been better used for a patient with a more complex illness. It is always a fine balancing act.

Research shows that nationally there are 57 million G.P. consultations a year for minor ailments which equates to an hour a day for every G.P. There is no question whatsoever that G.Ps want to relinquish their role with patients and not treat the ill patient. Yet we all have a duty to look after ourselves; in other words to self-care. Our own health remains the prime responsibility of each and everyone of us. For non-minor ailments that becomes the joint duty with the doctor or the most appropriate health professional.

We do not all have a computer and the last thing the Practice wants to do is to shift responsibility to the patient alone. It has to be appreciated, however, that we do have a responsibility for our own health and wellbeing.

If you are seeking advice for what can be termed a minor ailment why not call for an appointment with Ian Coleman on 01457 872228 or for those with a computer why not go on to one of the many websites relating to self-care? The advice given on each of these websites is extensive and can apply after you have seen a doctor as well as before a consultation.

The list is: Practice's website: www.saddleworthmedicalpractice.com ; the National Association for Patient Participation on www.napp.org.uk or the Self-Care Forum – www.selfcareforum.org

Additionally advice can always be sought on (NHS) 111 which is the national telephone number which is staffed 24 hours per day by trained personnel.