

ELDERCARE BULLETIN

July 2005

This month's newsletter introduces a new service, provides updates on some of the established services and has reminders about ways you can improve care for your older patients.

New Service

Stroke Rehabilitation in the Community

This community "rehab" programme is an opportunity to improve a person's function, after a stroke, in his or her own home, in circumstances where they do not need to be in the hospital environment. The multidisciplinary team has a Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Language Therapist, Dietitian and Nurse. Dr Geoff Green, Geriatrician, ATR Unit, Middlemore Hospital presented an overview of this new service at a recent CME/CNE.

Referrals for Geriatric Assessment

A request from the Middlemore Hospital geriatricians that you send referrals directly to Assessment Treatment and Rehabilitation (ATR) on Fax 270 4751. Remember good information will ensure that the referral receives appropriate action.

Primary Options for Acute Care (POAC)

Referring your patient to POAC? Will they need ongoing support when they leave POAC? Refer to Needs Assessment and Service Coordination for initial or review assessment at the same time as referring to POAC if you think they may require long-term care. This will ensure that your patient has adequate support on discharge from POAC.

Notes from ImmNuZ issues 39, March 2005:

Pertussis Epidemic

Pertussis affects all ages and can be confusing to diagnose. An example given was of an older woman who presented with a cough and was diagnosed with pneumonia that did not respond to antibiotics. With no response after further treatment a throat swab confirmed pertussis. For your information a clinical flow chart is available online www.immune.org.nz



Living Positively with Dementia

A multidisciplinary symposium for health professionals with a focus on nutrition

Date: Saturday 10 September 2005
Time: 0900 – 1600 hours
Venue: "Tasman Room" Level 2, Centennial Stand, Alexandra Park, Green Lane
Registrations before 31 July 2005 - \$55
Late Registrations until 26 August 2005 - \$65
(Lunch included)

This symposium is provided by the NZ Nutrition Foundation, NZ Gerontology Association (Auckland Branch) and the NZ Dietetic Association (Special interest group: Nutrition and Gerontology).

For more details and application form contact ElderCare

Vitamin D and Falls

Message from the Public Health Nutrition Advice, March 2005

Recent evidence is emerging that there may be a direct correlation between vitamin D and muscle strength

1. If possible expose face, hands and arms and possibly legs to 10-15 minutes of sunlight three times per week
2. A daily vitamin D supplement may be necessary for older adults to prevent vitamin D deficiency

For details of this research in a recent journal article contact ElderCare

EASTHEALTH ELDERCARE

Established in 2000, ElderCare is a coordination service, which supports general practice in the care for their older patients. Information gathering and sharing, and networking with intermediary and secondary care at Middlemore Hospital and the community groups caring for older people are key components of this service.



EastHealth ElderCare - phone 576 3820, fax 576 3822, email: eldercare@easthealth.co.nz
EastHealth Primary Health Organisation, PO Box 38 248, Howick

Mental Health Services for Older People

Psychiatric District Nurses have provided ElderCare with information on the often seen mental health disorders in the community.

Depression in older age

Chronic low-grade depression over a long period of time, although not severe, has a considerable impact on a person's life and may put them at risk of self-harm or alcohol abuse. They may appear gloomy, withdrawn, lethargic with low self-confidence and little pleasure from life.

Depression in the older person may present as severe anxiety or worry, confusion, an over focus on a bodily symptom, irritability, intolerance of noise, social withdrawal or isolation, being unable to sleep or wanting to sleep a lot, loss of appetite, feeling of being overwhelmed by loneliness, sadness, restlessness, inability to concentrate, poor memory, sadness or gloom – often worse in the morning, hopelessness or a desire to “end it all”

Medication for depression and anxiety. The S.S.R.I.s Selective Serotonin Re-uptake Inhibitors. A patient handout for those taking the SSRIs.

Sundowning – caring for someone with dementia

Sundowning is a term used to explain the confusion, restlessness and insecurity that a person with dementia may experience in the late afternoon or evening. They may become more demanding, upset, suspicious and disorientated and even hear or see things that are not real, especially at night. This handout provides information for the carer on the causes, the medical management, and what measures may be tried in the person's home to help manage this behaviour.

Delirium

Includes information on “What is delirium?” the causes and signs and symptoms, who develops delirium, how long does it last, current treatments, the psychiatric management, managing the environmental, supportive, and physical interventions, clinical features influencing treatment long term effects of delirium.

Copies of these information handouts are available from ElderCare.

The Mental Health Services for Older People is contactable on phone 270 9797, after hours urgent calls on phone 270 4742.

EastHealth ElderCare - phone 576 3820, fax 576 3822, email: eldercare@easthealth.co.nz
EastHealth Primary Health Organisation, PO Box 38 248, Howick

Reminder: Changes to income and asset testing July 01 2005.

You may get queries from your patients' families about whether people already in residential care can be assessed for support – please refer them to Needs Assessment and Service Coordination on 276 0040

Updates for the ElderCare Directory

Health Point provides “A national integrated, web-based system providing a single access point for doctors and patients to source up-to-date information on medical healthcare services” www.healthpoint.co.nz

Portfolios

Health Practitioners Competency Act

Another way to keep up your education without leaving home!

Ongoing education is available online.

CNE points are available from

<http://www.medscape.com/homepage>

Physical Diagnosis in Elderly People. Release date March 2005 - valid for credit through March 23, 2006.

This CNE/CME is an activity for those who provide health care to older people. It aims to “provide comprehensive information about the physical diagnosis in elderly adults”

Well worth a look – the contents include reviewing perceptions of ageing, presentation of illness in older people, changes in the clinician's perspective and clinically relevant differences between young and old people.

Journal articles for information

Dinner Bed and Breakfast for Older People: early experiences of a short-term service to manage acute hospital demand. Hanger, C., Griffith, S. L., McGreoch, G. and Abernethy, P. NZMJ Vol 118, No 1214.

Driving Assessment Information Brochure

“So your doctor has referred you for a medical driving assessment – What does this mean for you?”

Produced by the NZ association of Occupational Therapists – available from ElderCare

