Squeaky clean: the lowdown on sterile services

Pioneering research: working to find a cure for spinal cord injuries

NEW!

Secret lives:
This month
Chris Randall
(HR by day, rock star by night)

A day in the life: an insight into how you really spend your day
Childcare co-ordinator Gill Tew calls it quits

Gill Tew is one of 20 members of staff who have joined the Trust’s eight-week ‘Stop Smoking Staff Support Programme’ – and she has agreed to keep Inside Story informed of her progress! Gill said: “I’ve been smoking for 29 years but want to give up because I feel my health would benefit, and my children keep nagging me! I’ve joined the programme because I think it will be easier to give up with lots of support, rather than do it on my own”. With a success rate of up to 70%, the programme takes a holistic approach, coupled with two clinically proven methods for stopping smoking, and is part of the Trust’s commitment to a smoke free environment. Good luck Gill!

Find out more about the programme from Caroline Douglas, stop smoking services manager on x 9431 (caroline.douglas@uclh.nhs.uk)

Previously a radiographer at Diana Princess of Wales Hospital, Lincolnshire Uzoamaka Ikwumelu recently moved to London and has joined the imaging department at UCH in the same role. Her job is varied, and includes taking general x-rays in outpatients, inpatient wards, and A&E, as well as taking part in special investigations. Uzoamaka is enjoying her new role so far: “The team have been so welcoming, showing me around and teaching me how to use the new equipment. I am really looking forward to developing myself here”.

Bankole Atiba will be recognised by many in the patient booking department at the NHNN, where he has been working on a temporary basis for a year. In his new role as patient booking co-ordinator, Bankole hopes to continue to contribute to the team’s successful record of significantly reducing the number of outpatients who do not attend their appointments. Bankole is looking forward to focusing on the hospital’s policy of giving patients a choice of appointments: “I have really enjoyed working in this department. The team are terrific with everyone working together and there is a warm atmosphere at NHNN. I have also been impressed by the high standard of care delivered to patients”.

Kenny Mole has joined the pharmacy at UCH as medicines information pharmacist. His role is diverse and includes: providing medical information to a range of people including pharmacists and health professionals, evaluating medicines use within the hospital, providing a ward pharmacy service and helping to teach junior pharmacists. Previously at Northwick Park Hospital, Harrow in a similar role, he says: “Everyone seems really friendly and have been extremely welcoming. I’m really looking forward to getting started and stuck-in to the role”.

It’s all change for Nathalie F-Robertson who recently moved to London from Canada and has joined the Trust as assistant to the European Group for Blood & Marrow Transplant (EBMT) Registry. The EBMT is a huge database containing transplant information from throughout Europe which is regularly used for research purposes. Nathalie’s role is to assist and support the statistician data manager in collating data for it. On joining the Trust, Nathalie says: “It’s an exciting department to be working in. After moving countries, it is reassuring to be working in such a nice environment”.

New faces at UCLH

A one-stop success

The Huntington Disease Association’s regional care advisory team has won the prestigious ‘long-term conditions’ category at the Department of Health’s Health and Social Care Awards. The award is for their role in multi-disciplinary clinics for patients with, or at risk of, Huntington’s Disease (HD), an inherited neurodegenerative disease. Held at the NHNN, the advisors work alongside clinical, nursing and administrative staff to provide a ‘one stop shop’, offering specialist advice and knowledge in one place, at one time.

Dr Sarah Tabrizi, lead clinician says: “The work of the care advisors is an excellent example of the benefits of linking the care of patients with HD in an outpatient hospital setting with their care at home and in the community. Their input has been essential to the success of this service.”

Board headlines…

Highlights of January’s board discussions included… The development of the ‘clinical efficiency project’ to improve the way we provide services to patients… The success of the interim discharge policy in ensuring we meet the target of 98% of patients waiting no more than four hours in A&E… The donation of outdated equipment from The Middlesex Hospital to Mulago Hospital in Kampala, the main teaching hospital in Uganda.

Papers for the Board of Directors’ meetings are on our website – follow the link from the Trust Management section of Insight.
Webwatch:
new Insight people directory goes live

You can find contact details for any of our 6,000 staff at the click of a button now that the new people directory has gone live on Insight. You can find the directory via a link on the left-hand column of the Insight home page. New features of the directory include an editing tool which allows each user to update their own profile and an option to include a photograph of yourself. But there’s a catch – the directory will only be as good as you make it, because each member of staff will be responsible for updating their own details.

How to edit your personal profile:
1. Search for your name using the people search in the blue bar running across the top of the page.
2. Click on your name to open your profile page.
3. Click on the ‘Edit my details’ button on the right-hand side of your profile page.
4. Change your details as required (you can add a photograph of yourself if you like).
5. Finally, click on the ‘Validate changes’ button on the right-hand side to save your details.

If you can’t find your profile, or are unable to edit your details please email: webmaster@uclh.nhs.uk / x 5165 with your UserID (the name you use to login to your PC e.g. ASMITH). PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR PASSWORD – this is confidential information that should be known only by you.

First meeting of the ‘Staff Network’

Last month, all Trust staff were invited to attend the second ‘Staff Network’ meeting, held at 250 Euston Road. The Network has been set up to provide staff from all backgrounds with the opportunity to access support and guidance in relation to their work and to provide views on how the Trust can respond to issues relating to Diversity and Equality. Staff agreed terms of reference and a proposal which contained themes for discussion at future network meetings. Issues such as accessing mentoring, considering disability and its affect on service users, cultural event celebration were amongst some of the themes proposed. Meetings are planned to be held every other month, and will continue to be open to all staff. An official launch of the network is scheduled to take place later in the year. If you have a question about the role of the Staff Network, or a suggestion about how the Trust can support diversity and equality issues, please contact Sonal Pyne on ext 3899 / sonal.pyne@uclh.nhs.uk

Cecil Fleming House demolished!

After a six-month demolition process, all seven storeys of Cecil Fleming House have now been reduced to dust. Demolition began in late July 2005, just a few days after the last patients and staff moved into UCH. The building proved extremely resilient and it was necessary to temporarily support all the floors so that 15 tonne hydraulic impact breakers could be used to break out the concrete. During the course of the demolition, 2,000 tonnes of steel and 15,000 tonnes of rubble were removed for re-use and recycling!

The steel reinforcement has now been smelted down to produce new building materials and is likely to be sold abroad. All the brick and concrete leaving the site has been cleaned and graded and is already being used at Heathrow T5, Wembley Stadium, the new White City development and Limetrees Golf Club in Middlesex!

Construction can now begin on Phase 2 of the new hospital development – the new Elizabeth Garrett Anderson wing specialising in women’s and children’s services, due to open in 2008.

If any member of staff would like a closer look at the construction work for Phase 2, contact Richard Patten – 07740 030945
Every year the sterile services department ensures that 65,000 trays of medical instruments and equipment are in the right place, at the right time, in a state fit for use in examinations, minor procedures and full-scale operations across the Trust. With over 3,000 different types of equipment in use, and hundreds of thousands of procedures per year, in several locations, this is an enormous challenge for the 40-strong department.

The risks of getting it wrong are huge, but perhaps the biggest challenge lies in ensuring that every piece of equipment that leaves the department is squeaky clean, so the risk of cross infection is eliminated. But as the bugs have become more sophisticated, so have the procedures used to destroy them. Sylvia Martin, sterile services manager explains: ‘Each and every piece of equipment has to undergo a rigorous process to ensure that it is sterile before use. This includes decontamination in what looks like a giant dishwasher, then sterilisation, both at a specified temperature for a time. Indestructible bugs like vCJD mean that our equipment is subject to daily inspections and the Department of Health issues very strict guidelines about how sterile services departments are run, with a particular focus on regular equipment inspections and how staff work. Very different from the ‘before’ photograph, taken at the sterile services department in the 1960s!’

Because the risks of cross infection are potentially fatal, all sterile services departments are now also required to have a tracking system. As Sylvia says, ‘The trays of equipment which leave our department have their own ‘name tag’, a unique identification number, which enables us to trace the precise details of the cleaning process. This unique identification number is then placed in patient notes, so that in the highly unlikely event of a patient contracting an infection from equipment, we could trace it, identify others in the batch and take appropriate action.’

A new era

The emphasis on infection control, plus the technological advances in medical equipment has marked a new era for staff working in sterile services who need a high level of skill and extensive knowledge of the instruments available, and how they work. As Sylvia says, ‘Nationally, sterile services has really straightened up its act, and become a recognised profession in its own right. We are keen to build on this here at UCLH, and give staff the opportunity to study for recognised qualifications. We’re delighted that six members of staff (see the role of honour right), have recently passed the Technical Vocational Qualification from the Institute of Decontamination Sciences. We are really proud of them particularly as they’ve done this in their own time, on top of their day jobs. We are also looking to develop our senior staff through the City and Guilds course, which will enable them to ensure the department continues to run to the highest standards.’
Although the department is one of the last to leave the Middlesex, their new home will be worth the wait. Situated on P4 in the new hospital, the purpose-built department will house state-of-the-art technology but there are other benefits as Sylvia explains, ‘Being centrally located means we’ll be able to offer a much quicker, more efficient service to the Trust. We can’t wait to move and to put all of our new plans and ideas into practice. The staff are really looking forward to leaving the basement for sunnier climes, or at least some daylight!’

With new developments planned such as the centralisation of the decontamination of endoscopy equipment and a new set of guidelines from the Department of Health with which we must comply by 2007, it’s all happening in sterile services. Once considered a ‘cinderella’ service, it looks like it’s their time to go to the ball…

### Next steps

### Did you know?

Every year, the sterile services department uses:

- 130,000 preparation sponges
- 136,500 sheets of wrapping paper
- 112,000 instrument bags
- 3,060 pairs of disposable gloves

Plus, the van carrying equipment to and from sites across the Trust clocks up an average 6,600 miles per year!

### Awards for the team

Staff received their certificates from Dr Geoff Ridgway, former head of the microbiology department, and President of Institute of Decontamination Sciences. Upon presenting the certificates, Dr Ridgway praised the staff for their commitment to further their studies, and their desire to improve the quality of the service they provide. He also highlighted the role of sterile services as the key to safe surgery and felt very encouraged by the Trust’s commitment to support them in their studies.

### Roll of honour

TVQ part one:

- Robina Rafiq
- Poothathamby Ananthaseelan
- Colin Vine
- Zenaida Halog
- Margaret Boakye Danquah
- Mehul Shah

Management of the Decontamination process for reusable medical devices (City and Guilds)

- Colin Vine
- Lourdes Pena
- Zenaida Halog
- Cherry Umayam
Groundbreaking research heralds breakthrough for treatment of spinal cord injuries

Over the last year, UCLH has been carrying out pioneering research offering new hope to those who have suffered severe injuries to their spinal cord. This research is being done in partnership with UCL and has been led by Professor Geoff Raisman and his team, who are based at the Spinal Repair Unit at the Institute of Neurology. The team is now at the threshold of demonstrating that it is possible for human severed spinal cord nerve fibres to grow back and restore lost functions. This could lead to the successful repair of spinal injuries, which have long been considered incurable.

At the cutting edge

Professor Raisman is one of the first neuroscientists whose work has raised the real possibility that spinal cord injuries could be repaired.

His key discovery was that there is one part of the nervous system, a region in the nasal cavity concerned with the sense of smell, in which nerve fibres are in a state of continuous growth throughout adult life.

Raisman’s team transplanted cells from this region into the injured spinal cord of laboratory rats, and found that the cells had a remarkable capacity to integrate into the damaged areas, laying a ‘bridge’ over the gap in the nerve fibres caused by injury. The team found that these same repairing cells that are found in rats can be obtained from the nasal cavity of human adults.

Licence to begin human stem cell treatment

Professor Raisman’s team has now been issued with the first UK clinical licence to transplant cells derived from the nasal lining in order to repair spinal cord injuries. The patient effectively becomes his or her own cell donor, avoiding the need to find donor individuals, foreign stem cells or powerful designer drugs with unknown side-effects.

If the team can prove that this technique can be transferred to humans, it may be possible to successfully treat a wide range of spinal injuries. For paraplegic patients this could lead to a return of sensation and movement to some leg muscles, potentially allowing them to stand and making movement easier, while tetraplegics (patients with spinal injury high in the neck region), could recover touch sensation and movement of the hands, and regain the ability to dress, feed and clean independently.

The first ten patients will be treated early this year at the NHNN. The trial will be the first ever attempt to make spinal cord nerve repairs. All the patients have suffered a type of injury most often seen in motorcycle accidents where nerves in the arm are pulled out of the spinal cord.

Professor Raisman said: “This first trial will be crucial. If it succeeds, it will show that these cells are effective at restoring nerve fibre connections, meaning we may be able to give these patients back the use of their arms.

“This could open the door to treating all kinds of connective nerve fibre conditions, including spinal injuries, the most severe kinds of stroke, and blindness and deafness caused by nerve fibre injury.”
In the first of a new series about hobbies and interests you have outside work, Inside Story gets ‘up close and personnel’ with Chris Randall, Assistant Director of Workforce.

By day he’s responsible for managing the Trust’s recruitment and medical staffing services and the IWL initiative, but by night Chris Randall is also one half of ‘Widescreen’, a band who already have a UK chart single on their CV!

The band released their single ‘Tailspin’ a couple of years ago and it reached no. 106 in the UK singles chart. Chris claims that it was as a result of hundreds of fans buying the CD but admits to buying 20 copies himself from HMV in Oxford Street! Apparently it is still available on Amazon for 99p!

“I’ve always been involved in music, whether it be studying classical piano, playing the french horn or playing in various bands.” After failing to get in to Cardiff University to study music – “because I couldn’t sight read” – Chris pursued a career in HR but continued to maintain his interest in music in his spare time. The band, who “sound not unlike Coldplay mixed with early Radiohead” signed a deal with Sony a couple of years ago which included shooting a video that was shown on MTV and recording their single Tailspin.

Chris and brother Jez write and play all the music themselves. “Jez does the lead vocals, and I play bass guitar and keyboards as well as pressing start on the drum machine and indulging in a bit of singing every now and then!”

Widescreen have spent the last five months in the studio recording their first album. A series of gigs will follow in the summer with a release date planned around the same time. Listen out for more news!

After an impressive 20 years of service at the Middlesex shop, Norman Patel won the tender to run the new UCH shop. Inside Story paid a visit to the new site and found out a little more about what Norman gets up to during his working day...

“I start the day by opening my shop at 7am, from Monday through to Friday. It is quiet at that time, but at around 8:30am, my assistant Kumar visits the wards delivering newspapers to patients. The shop starts to get busy soon after that and remains busy throughout the day, going quieter again after 6pm. I tend to shut up shop around 8:30pm.

“Different people come into my shop – staff, patients and visitors – and people just passing by outside the hospital too. I stock more in this shop than I did at the Middlesex, including cards, confectionery, newspapers, toiletries and flowers too. I even made the flower stand myself you know!

“I wanted to run this shop so much and am absolutely thrilled that I’ve got it. I’m known as Mr Patel now rather than Norman, although lots of people still call me Norman – even kids!

“I love working here. It’s my customers that inspire me and motivate me. They’re like my extended family. Sometimes people are going through very difficult experiences and I will always try to cheer them up if I can. I’m looking forward to the future and hope to stay here at UCH for at least another 10 years. This is my new home.”
If you missed out on a romantic meal this Valentine’s Day, don’t despair! Inside Story has teamed up with Italian restaurant Amaretto Ristorante on Tottenham Court Road to offer one lucky reader the chance to win a complimentary two-course dinner for two with a bottle of house wine.

To enter, all you have to do is answer this simple question:

On which floor of UCH is the Sterile Services department located?

Entries should be emailed to competition@uclh.nhs.uk (in the Trust’s address book) or via internal mail to January competition, Communications Unit, 2nd Floor Central, 250 Euston Road. Entries close on Friday 10 March 2006.

Amaretto is also offering a 15% discount to all staff who present their ID card. (Pre-booking essential – please mention this offer and state that you work at UCLH when booking).

What’s new at the 52?

- Prices for 2006/7 were set by the new 52 Club committee at the recent AGM – check the committee notice board in the Club reception for details
- Get in the swim! – a sponsored swim in aid of the Greening Project at the Homoeopathic Hospital will be taking place at the Club on 28 February. To take part, or make a donation, contact Barry Hall on x 8820
- Spring promotion – throughout February and March, buy five classes and get your sixth free – applicable to all classes except Wing Tjun

Find out more about the 52 Club, the Trust’s fantastic leisure facility, by visiting the staff room section on Insight.

Charity Watch

Patagonia Glacier Trek
26 October – 5 November 2006
The next sponsored overseas trek raising funds for UCL Hospitals will take place amidst the spectacular wilderness of granite peaks, turquoise lakes and glaciers of the Patagonian Andes in Chile. If you would like to experience some of the world’s most stunning scenery whilst raising money for key projects please contact: Helen Sandwell extension 2415/9558, helen.sandwell@uclh.nhs.uk or to support projects at the National Hospital, Theresa Dauncey extension 3324, theresa.dauncey@uclh.nhs.uk.

LALU Raffle Success
Patient Ralph Rulach (left in photo) collected first prize of £1,000 travel vouchers on behalf of his son, Raymond at the Leukaemia & Lymphoma Unit Patients’ Christmas Party, from Prof Tony Goldstone (right). A second prize was won by Sarah Clarke (centre). The raffle raised almost £6,000 for the Unit.

Inside Story is the staff magazine for UCL Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and is produced by the Communications Unit every month. It’s YOUR newsletter, so send your news, views and stories to us (with photos if you have them) to: Sam Coombs, Communications Unit, Second Floor Central, 250 Euston Road, London NW1 2PG or contact her on x 4386 or by email, sam.coombs@uclh.nhs.uk

The Friends of UCLH
The Friends are now firmly established in their office next to the Voluntary Services on the ground floor of the new hospital. Do pop in and see Cynthia, the Administrator, if you would like to become a member of the Friends or if you wish to have a chat about applying for a grant for your department. The office is open on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Ext 73038, email: friendsuclh@uclh.nhs.uk

Date for your diary
23 March 2006 will see the first UCL/UCLH Nursing and Midwifery Research Day take place in the UCH podium, in the seminar room on the second floor. Nursing research from both UCL and UCLH will be presented, and workshops on literature searches, writing for publication, applying for ethics and R&D approval will be running inwards and departments throughout the UCH site. Attendance to the presentation and workshops is free! For a registration form or to find out more contact Alison Leary – a.leary@ucl.ac.uk or Julie Sanders – j.sanders@ucl.ac.uk

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