

Men's Health Scrutiny Review Group

Notes – 15 November 2006

Present from the Men's Health Scrutiny Review Group were:

Councillors Alan Hall (Chair of the Review Group) Chris Flood, Chris Maines and Andrew Milton; Donal O'Sullivan, Deputy Director of Public Health Lewisham PCT; Eleanor Rees, Policy and Research Officer, LBL; William Godwin, Policy Manager, Community Services, LBL.

Also in attendance were:

Councillor Abi Ibitson; Roger Raymond, Committee Support Officer, LBL; Cynthia Gaynor-Bailey, Governance Support, LBL; Dr. Ashok Jain, Lead GP for Cancer, Lewisham PCT; Juney Muhammad, SLAM (and SLAM representative for the Review); Joy Ellery, Director of Knowledge, Governance and Communications, University Hospital Lewisham (UHL); Alastair Whittington, Director, South-East London Cancer Network; Michael Hamilton, Young People's Health Project, Lewisham PCT; Graham Rushbrook, Director, Health First Sylvia Livett, Health First; Annette Carty, The Stroke Association; Duncan Bailey, resident.

Apologies: Councillor Sylvia Scott; Joan Ruddock MP; Sarah Wainer, Head of Strategy and Performance, LBL; Sylvia Curtis, Sports and Leisure Contracts Manager, LBL; Oliver Lake, Associate Director of Communications and PPI, Lewisham PCT; Marion Gibbon, Public Health Specialist, Lewisham PCT; Miriam Mica, Mental Health Promotion Co-ordinator (Lewisham), SLAM; Carole Wesley-Brown, Under Pressure; Jenny Smith, CentrePoint; Jackie Perry, Diabetes UK (Lewisham Branch).

The Chair welcomed everyone attending the meeting.

1 Notes from the Meeting Held on 25 October 2006

1.1 The notes were agreed.

2 Men's health – Male Cancers

2.1 Dr. Ashok Jain, Lead GP for Cancer for Lewisham PCT, gave a presentation on Male Cancers in Lewisham. The paper for the meeting was prepared by Marion Gibbon, Public Health Specialist, Lewisham PCT.

2.2 The Key Points from the presentation were as follows:

- 25% of all deaths in England and Wales are due to cancers, this is also reflected locally in Lewisham. Lewisham has seen a 20% decrease in patients diagnosed with cancer since 1997.
- Prostate cancer is now the most common cancer in men, overtaking lung cancer. Breast, lung, colorectal and prostate cancers account for almost half (49.2%) of the cancers in Lewisham.

- The number of people diagnosed with cancer increases with age, especially for the 55-75 group.
- The National Cancer Plan target is to reduce mortality from cancer in people under 75 years by 20% by 2010. Nationally there was a 20% reduction in mortality between 1990 and 2000, however in Lewisham it was only 14%.

Lung Cancer

- In terms of lung cancer, incidence of lung cancer in males has declined substantially and consistently in the last decade and in 2003 was over 40% lower than in 1993. Lung cancer accounts for 17% of cancer cases but 22% of deaths, as survival from lung cancer is poor - on average only 8% of people survive 5 years after diagnosis. Lung cancer mortality has been consistently higher in Lewisham than in London or in England and Wales. In males, mortality has declined on average faster than the national decline.
- Approximately 90% of lung cancer sufferers are smokers.

Prostate Cancer

- There has been a substantial increase in the number of people diagnosed with prostate cancer in Lewisham. This is similar to national trends and is likely to be due to the increase in early diagnosis.

Stomach Cancer

- Incidences of and mortality from stomach cancer is higher in Lewisham than in London or England and Wales.
- However, advances in scientific knowledge in combating stomach cancer has led to a sharp decrease in stomach cancer.
- There is a simple breath test for an organism called *Helicobacter Pylori*, an important risk factor for cancer of the stomach. A patient's risk of stomach cancer can be significantly reduced using this test and antibiotic treatment of infection with this organism.

Colon, Rectal And Bladder Cancer

- In males there was an increase in colon cancer in the late 1990s but in 2003 rates were lower than in 1993.
- With bowel cancer, mortality is generally much lower in London than in England and Wales – but Lewisham bucks the trend and is higher in males and on average has declined little. The reasons why people suffer from bowel cancer are complex, but there is a link to diet.
- There are no clear trends for incidence over the period of 1993-2003 for bladder cancer and numbers are quite small. However, data for 2003 appears to show an increase in diagnoses over the preceding years

Skin Cancer

- There are no clear trends over the period of 1993-2003 for all skin cancer and numbers are relatively small. Data for 2003 shows an increase in diagnoses over the preceding years. The numbers of people dying from skin cancer are small and therefore the rates vary significantly from year-to-year.

Differences by Ward and Neighbourhood

- The wards with the highest incidences of cancers were New Cross, Evelyn, Brockley and Telegraph Hill. The reason why these wards could have higher incidences of cancer could be due to socio-economic factors, smoking and diet.

2.3 Members of the Review Group received a note from Rick Poppert, Urologist at Guy's & St. Thomas NHS Foundation Trust on the positive work carried out at Guy's & St. Thomas in respect of prostate cancer.

2.4 Sylvia Livett of Health First gave an overview of the evaluation of a cancer awareness pilot initiative which took place in two Lambeth pharmacies.

- This pilot aimed to encourage people with persistent coughs, indigestion or rectal bleeding who are most at risk of developing cancer to seek advice from their GP sooner than they may have otherwise done. Leaflets providing information on the symptoms and risk factors were handed out to middle-aged and older customers in two Lambeth pharmacies when they purchased over-the-counter medication for these symptoms.
- Whilst there is some resistance to consulting GPs, people (especially men) are more likely to visit their pharmacist and seek advice/over the counter treatments for symptoms typically associated with some cancers e.g. indigestion, rectal bleeding, persistent coughs.
- The aim of the pilot was to raise men's awareness of symptoms that could be related to cancer and discuss them in an environment they were more comfortable in. It was also about helping men to present themselves to their GPs once they had discussed with pharmacists their symptoms. It would also help to improve the survival rates of cancer if they can be detected early.
- The pilot ran for three months, with customers generally positive about the leaflets and approach used. Feedback from customers will be used to make the leaflets more eye catching and to emphasise the more positive message that "early diagnosis saves lives".
- Pharmacy staff found the approach practical to implement, handing out 272 leaflets over the three-month period. 68% of customers said their awareness had increased due to the intervention, and pharmacy staff identified 11 patients whose symptoms warranted an informal referral to their GP. 87% of customers saying their awareness had increased due to the intervention
- Lambeth PCT's Health Awareness Group have agreed to adopt the this approach in its pharmacies, and will investigate expanding the range of cancers covered by the pilot.

2.5 Discussion and Issues Raised:

- The Assistant Director of Public Health, Lewisham PCT, praised the work of South-East London Cancer Network in helping to improve the care of cancer patients in the area. Their work, alongside the NHS, had led to co-ordinated cancer provision in the South-East area with specialised cancer teams in Guy's & St. Thomas for prostate cancer and King's College Hospital for bladder cancer. There is a South-East London Cancer Centre and Guy's &

St. Thomas are in the forefront for research of cancer care, both are beneficial for the South-East London residents.

- Members asked about the causes for cancers, for example lung cancer and smoking. Health professionals commented that lung cancer and smoking had the most powerful association, though other contributory factors included lifestyle, diet and socio-economic factors. The Director of the South-East London Cancer Network said that cancers such as head and neck cancer were strongly linked to smoking and alcohol consumption.
- West Lancashire District Council had approved a complete ban on smoking in its buildings and outside council premises. Workers who ignore the ban will face disciplinary action and could lose their jobs. The Scrutiny Review group were informed that Lewisham staff members are now only allowed to smoke in either lunch-time or time they take as 'flexible working hours'.
- Questions were asked on what positive action could be taken on combating prostate cancer. The Review Group were told that if men presented themselves to their GP earlier, then there was a much higher chance of effective treatment. Early signs of prostate cancer were frequent urination, especially at night, inability to urinate, blood in the urine or semen, and frequent pain in the lower back, hips or thighs. The question was asked why there is a higher incidence of prostate cancer in Lewisham within the black communities. Health professionals do not know precisely why males from black communities have a higher prevalence of prostate cancer. A community development approach could be used to promote early detection.
- The Review Group were told that oncologists at the Royal Marsden Hospital were conducting research into the detection of prostate cancer. However with prostate cancer, it might be appropriate to adopt a policy of "watch and wait", as the tumour might not develop prior to the patient dying of other cause not related to their cancer. Treatments for prostate cancer have significant side-effects and these need to be weighed up against the options of no treatment.
- Members of the Review Group asked about cancers caused by asbestos and testicular cancer in Lewisham and why they did not feature individually on the statistics provided for the meeting. The Review Group were told that there was only a small number of cases in Lewisham of cancer caused by asbestos. In respect of testicular cancer, if it is detected early there is an overall cure rate of 95%. However it is significant as it affects much younger men than other major cancers.
- Members of the Review Group asked about socio-economic factors affecting cancers. The Director of South-East London Cancer Network said that lung cancer has a propensity to affect those in lower socio-economic backgrounds. This could also be related to other factors such as diet and smoking. Breast cancer affects more women in higher socio-economic background. This could be related to delayed childbirth and use of hormone supplements, and dietary factors.
- Members of the Review Group asked what impact would a significant injection in funding for combating cancer in Lewisham have in reducing mortality. The Review Group were told that an increase in funding to combat cancer would be helpful, the most significant factors would be smoking cessation and improvements in diet and exercise in the borough. The reduction in mortality rates for cancer would also be improved with a significant culture shift where the funding priorities are put into prevention. Improving diets of young people with more healthier school dinners,

nutritional classes and more exercise in schools would help to start the process of healthier diets and lifestyles over a generation.

- It was suggested that choice in school dinners should be limited to help encourage schoolchildren to eat healthy school dinners. The Deputy Director of Public Health suggested that the Review group could look at nutrition and food strategy in more detail in the review.
- Members of the Review Group considered that the council could stipulate that contractors should adhere to the “no-smoking” rules of the Council outside of council buildings and in the community.
- Members of the Review Group asked about bench-marking and the quality of care of NHS Trusts in the catchment area for Lewisham residents. The Director of the South-East London Cancer Network said that they were working on a six-month audit on benchmarking the cancer services in the region so they are able to measure the quality year-on-year in the future. South-East London is host to some of the best cancer facilities in the country. The Deputy Director of Public Health said that work was on-going to ensure that all GPs worked to the same standard in respect of cancer care. However performance is entirely reliant on people presenting to GPs to assess their symptoms.
- The Review Group were told that work was on-going alongside the Health First pilot in Lambeth to improve and increase information pharmacists provide to patients on possible symptoms of cancer.
- Members of the Review Group asked about screening for prostate and bowel cancer. Dr. Jain said that Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test can detect an increased risk of prostate cancer but it is insufficiently specific to detect cancer. Two out of three men with raised PSA will not have any cancer cells and up to one in five men with prostate cancer will have a normal PSA result. In respect of bowel cancer, the national pilot of bowel screening is now complete and is being rolled out across the country. It has been operational since October 2006 in London.
- Members of the Review Group asked about whether anything can be done in respect of planning decisions by the council in influencing stopping shops and restaurants to offer healthy foods. The Review Group were told that the planning guidance is rigid and set by planning statute and such decisions would be up for legal challenge. The Chair of the Review Group said that the new Local Government White Paper looks at the role of the councillor and the corporate councillor. It could be an opportunity for the council to have an input in ensuring that local authorities have more of an influence in this area. There was also the need to make synergies across the board concerning the health implications for economic development.
- Members of the Review Group asked whether Lewisham offered free fruit in schools. The Review Group were told that some schools offered free fruit but the officers present were not clear whether it was a borough-wide policy.
- The Review Group were told that the survival rates for cancer were not as good in the UK as compared to other European countries.

Conclusions:

- a) The Review Group agreed to adopt the recommendations of the Lambeth Cancer awareness pilot as a recommendation of the Men’s Health Scrutiny Review to apply to Lewisham PCT regarding the role of pharmacies in the prevention agenda.

- b) The Review Group agreed to recommend that the council should look to limit the choice for school meals to encourage healthy eating in schoolchildren
- c) The Review Group agreed to recommend that the council and Lewisham PCT use its contractual powers to influence others by implementing a no smoking policy on all council and PCT sites to reinforce good practice.
- d) The Review Group agreed to feed into the response to the Local Government White Paper on planning and licensing issues, to make a recommendation that planning and licensing decisions include consideration of health implications.

3. Progress Report – Men's Health Review

The Chair reported that the Review Group would be revisiting the Action Learning aspect of the review so that it meets the requirements of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) funding. A new proposal would be agreed by members via correspondence. The next Men's Health Review meeting is scheduled for 13 December (mental health and well-being and a presentation from the Men's Health Forum) . There are two additional meetings for January 2007 – 10 and 31 January.