

The PPG is about  
PARTICIPATION  
your participation



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next event and have your say

## BLADDER and BOWEL EVENT at VMC 29 October 2019

**SPEAKERS: Mr Michael Stafford**, lead consultant in Urogynaecology, and **Deborah Alcade**, urogynaecology nurse, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital.

Mr Stafford told the meeting that C & W has a series of steps for both female and male patients suffering from bladder and bowel problems in order to establish the diagnosis and create a treatment plan. Their multi-disciplinary team consists of consultants, physiotherapists, specialist nurses, bowel surgeons etc. and there is an 18-week path from the initial consultancy to treatment. The assessment consists of the patient's history, investigations and treatment options for a variety of conditions from bladder dysfunction causing urinary incontinence, an overactive bladder and difficulty in emptying the bladder, to prolapse (pelvic organ prolapse in women and rectal prolapse in men), bowel dysfunction and chronic pelvic pain.

Mr Stafford explained the difference between stress and urge incontinence. Stress incontinence occurs when there is an increase in pressure in the abdomen such as when you cough, sneeze or bend over. Urge incontinence is when you feel the urge to empty your bladder but lose control before you manage to get to the lavatory. Overactive bladder is when you need to pass frequent small amounts of urine. Overactive bladder symptoms occur in both men and women with men suffering more than women later in life.

Men's urinary issues are usually related to the prostate.

Most symptoms can be dealt with by non-surgical treatments including physiotherapy for pelvic floor muscle retraining, biofeedback for the pelvic floor, bladder and bowel retraining, managing stress and urge incontinence, electrical therapy, lifestyle advice and manual therapy. A specialist nurse can advise on bladder retraining, pessaries, self-catheterisation, bowel management, non-medical prescriptions and intravesical treatments. The antidepressant drug Duloxetine can be effective in treating stress urinary incontinence in women, and drugs that relax the bladder such as Solifenacin can be used to treat an overactive bladder. Surgical therapy is occasionally required for stress and urge urinary incontinence.

The general advice for managing an overactive bladder was to drink less, avoid caffeine and alcohol and not to drink after 8.00 pm. For women, Deborah Alcade highly recommended [squeezy](#), the award-winning app that supports an effective pelvic floor muscle exercise programme. In addition, in order to achieve the optimum squatting position when sitting on the toilet, [everyone](#) should use a toilet foot stool, such as a Squatty Potty, to achieve a natural, comfortable and effective bowel movement.

A referral from your GP is necessary to make an appointment at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital.

# PPG

Patient Participation Group

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news

*Dear VMC and LPMC Patients,*

A recent PPG event on Bladder and Bowel problems was well attended. It was reassuring that most problems could be managed through self-help: small changes in diet, exercise and lifestyle – rather than hospitalisation. The next PPG event is on 16 January.

There is a lot of concern about the care available for patients with long-term conditions. Did you know that the practice has a Community Matron? Community Matrons are experienced senior nurses who work closely with patients (mainly those with serious long term or complex conditions) to plan and manage their nursing care and to give support and advice to patients and their carers.

There are eight Community Matrons in Westminster, each assigned to a GP practice and they work with adult patients. They see patients at home and in community settings and are part of a multi-disciplinary healthcare team from the NHS and Social Services. Our Community Matron is Mrs Judith Centofanti, profiled on page 3, who has been invited to lead the discussion on Carer Awareness at the PPG Annual General Meeting on Thursday 27 February.

If you join the PPG mailing list we will keep you up to date by email and you will be able to benefit more from all the services that the practice offers.

*Seasonal greetings,*

**Mary Orr**  
Chairman, VMC PPG

**!!! SAVE THE DATE !!!**

**Thursday 16 January**

**Heartburn and  
Indigestion**

causes – diagnoses – treatments

**Dr Matthew Banks**

Consultant Gastroenterologist  
and colleagues

**6.00 pm**

Group Room VMC,  
29 Upper Tachbrook Street  
SW1V 1SN

*The role of the Patient Participation Group is to improve communication between the practice and the patients to the benefit of both. If you are a Victoria Medical Centre or Lees Place Medical Centre patient and would like to keep in touch with our activities, please send us an email at [vmcppg@live.co.uk](mailto:vmcppg@live.co.uk) and ask to be put on the PPG mailing list.*

# NEWS FROM THE PRACTICE

## STAFF CHANGES

**Dr Rankine** is on sick leave until January when she will be back to work as normal. Temporary doctors will be staying on to cover while Dr Rankine is on sick leave.

**Dr James Thaxter**, who was a GP Registrar at VMC for two years up to August 2019, has now returned to join the clinical workforce as a permanent salaried GP.

**Rubina Korimbocus** has just been appointed as a permanent member of the reception team. Part of Rubina's role will be to ensure that all urgent requests the practice receives on a daily basis are allocated appropriately to the relevant member of the VMC team.

## CLINICS and SERVICES

Nurse practitioner **Ruth Thurlow** is now running a COPD and Asthma clinic every alternate Wednesday. The practice will proactively invite eligible patients for annual review where applicable for Asthma or COPD.

### Flu immunisation

Have you had your winter flu jab yet? The flu jab is still available to patients who are eligible. Although there will be some catch-up walk in clinics, please contact the surgery who will try their best to book you in for a jab as quickly as possible. Why not ask a receptionist to squeeze you in with a nurse at your next visit to the surgery or ask the doctor to give you a vaccine during your next appointment? Remember, this applies to both Lees Place and VMC patients.

## CLINICS and SERVICES cont.

### Cervical Screening (smear test)

A simple smear test can stop cancer before it starts! The practice is launching a cytology campaign so don't ignore your next smear test invitation. If you missed your last smear test, don't delay – book an appointment with a nurse today. Women between the ages of 25 and 40 are invited for cervical screening every three years and women aged 50 to 64 every five years.

**FACT** Cervical cancer affects women of all ages but it is most common in women aged 30 to 45.

**FACT** It is important to go for a smear test each time you are invited. This is the best way of checking the health of your cervix (neck of the womb).

**FACT** The test is very simple and only takes about five minutes. It is done in private at the surgery and you can ask to see a female doctor or nurse.

The **Atlas** Men's Well-being Programme was developed to engage stressed/distressed men with the aim of helping them to better understand how they are hard wired for stress, and how they can recover. It offers expert counselling or acupuncture to men who are patients of VMC/Lees Place MC. Ask your GP for a referral for counselling or acupuncture.

The **Atlas** Men's Stress and Resilience 5-stage Group programme will help you to practice ways for stabilising and calming the nervous system and bounce forward in the face of adversity by learning from each other in a supportive and encouraging way. The groups are run by expert facilitator Errol Dinnall. The first session begins on Saturday morning 25 January. To register please ask your GP.

## VMC – helpful information

### Appointments System

The appointment system at VMC has been reviewed and as a result there will be some changes in the New Year in order to provide more appointments with more appropriate clinicians. It will be a pilot for three months and patients will hopefully experience a more accessible service.

### Phlebotomy service

The walk in service has recently been overwhelmed partly because of increased demand and a spike in the number of requests for blood tests from medicine management teams who have to manage the administration of patient medication safely. This requires more blood monitoring for certain medications. The practice is currently working on reducing waiting times, possibly involving the introduction of pre-booked appointments.

### Think ahead!

If you have a repeat prescription coming up at the end of December, please make sure that you order it well in advance of Christmas, and note the following closing hours over the holidays.

### CHRISTMAS and NEW YEAR OPENING HOURS

25 December – Christmas Day	CLOSED
26 December – Boxing Day	CLOSED
27 December 8am to 6pm	OPEN
28–29 December	CLOSED
30 December 8am to 6pm	OPEN
31 December 8am to 6pm	OPEN
1 January – New Year's Day	CLOSED

## PRACTICE PROFILE



My name is Judith Centofanti and I work as VMC's Community Matron. As a History graduate I first worked as an editor but after reflecting on my career choice I decided to train as a nurse.

I trained at the Nightingale School of Nursing at St Thomas' Hospital. My nursing career has included working as a cardio-thoracic nurse, District Nurse and Clinical Lead for Intermediate and Continuing Care Services in Lambeth. I also worked as a nurse in Egypt, which presented some quite unique challenges.

Community Matrons are experienced senior nurses who work closely with GPs and other health and social care professionals in both community and acute settings to identify vulnerable and frail adult patients (mainly those with long-term complex conditions). Providing clinical and case management skills we support the patient and their carers in their own home.

*Judith*

Judith Centofanti  
Community Matron for VMC  
Central London Community Healthcare  
NHS Trust