

Surgery News

Since the arrangements for GP training were changed a year or two ago, our Registrars seem to come and go very rapidly. Sadly, we have just said a fond farewell to Dr Subha Nambi, who finished her six month stint with us on 31st January and has now moved on to do her final year of training at the Castle Gardens practice in Colchester. She had made a big impact here and we shall miss her, but we wish her the very best of luck in her new post. She is obviously going to be an excellent GP.

The positive side to losing Dr Nambi is that we have a new Registrar to welcome this month. She is Dr Corinne Vine who will also be doing six months in total with us. I say "in total" because she is expecting her first child in April, so will soon disappear on maternity leave for a few months, hopefully returning to us in time for the summer holiday rush. She has got off to a flying start and is already impressing everyone here, so she too will be missed during her absence.

Unlike any of our previous Registrars Dr Vine took an unusual route to qualification as a doctor. She first became a nurse, then having decided she wanted to be a doctor, resumed studying for a few more years. She qualified at Nottingham, and most recently worked at Clacton Hospital, so she already knows the area well.

Dr Vine was born and brought up in Sussex and what makes her a bit special in my eyes is that she played cricket for Sussex Ladies. I understand that she was a very canny spin bowler. It's a shame that she won't be available to turn out for the Tendring doctors' team this year. I just have a feeling that childbirth and cricket don't mix. Never mind; perhaps she'll bolster our attack during the 2013 season.

Apart from cricket, her other interests include amateur photography and, of all things, plumbing! Plumbing's loss is definitely medicine's gain.

On a very different subject, our reception staff have instructed me to remind everyone that we need their mobile 'phone numbers if possible. The system which enables us to send text reminders the day before appointments is working well and has certainly reduced the number of patients who forget that they are due to see us. However, we still have mobile numbers for less than 40% of you. Please do give us your number if you have one – and tell us if you have young children for whom texted reminders would be useful too.

We have been carrying out yet another paper-based Patient Satisfaction Survey recently. Thank you to those of you who have helped out with it, even anyone who hasn't been totally complimentary about us. (We prefer to know if there are problems with what we do as this gives us the chance to put things right.) We are still recruiting patients who are prepared to answer short surveys sent out by e-mail, so if you would be willing to spend a few minutes four or five times a year helping us review performance or shape the future of our services, please let me know. We don't plan to hold meetings – everything will be done by e-mail, so the commitment is very limited. Please contact me at postmaster.gp-f81021@nhs.net if you feel you can help.

Don't forget incidentally, that you don't have to wait to be asked to make suggestions about how we could improve things here at the surgery. I am always delighted to receive constructive ideas. They may not always be practical, but we'll always consider them.

Finally, apologies to anyone who has been the victim of the intermittent fault on our telephone lines over the last few weeks. The problem hasn't, we understand, been with the equipment here in the surgery, but lay in the local exchange. It led to many calls being suddenly cut of at apparently random intervals, which I know has been frustrating and sometimes infuriating for patients and staff alike. We are told that the fault has now been rectified, but having heard that more than once previously all I can do is keep my fingers crossed.

Hugh Cronin

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