



SCREENING MATTERS

Breast

Newsletter of the Northern Ireland Screening Programmes

Issue 1

Produced by the QARC for Health Professionals in the NI Screening Programmes

Oct 2001

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Report from the Regional QA Director

The Breast Screening Service in Northern Ireland continues to achieve excellent results. The service was recently commended in a paper by Dr Roger Blanks, the NHSBSP Statistician:

'the highest quality of screening is from Northern Ireland (2 views used for all screens) which has a high positive predictive value (18%), a low referral rate and a high cancer detection rate.'

There are a number of issues which need to be considered for the service to continue at its current high standard:

NEW GOVERNMENT POLICY The government propose to invite women up to the age of 70 by April 2004. This will generate a 40% increase in workload and have serious implications in both radiography and radiology manpower.

EQUIPMENT New mobiles have been provided for the Eastern and Northern Boards. Each Board received new ultrasound machines and a new digital stereotactic biopsy facility for the Eastern Board was also acquired.

A digital stereotaxis facility has been identified in the new allocation of NOF funding for the Northern, Western and Southern Boards. The Ulster Hospital hope to have this facility shortly for their symptomatic clinic which would leave the BCH symptomatic clinic as the only breast clinic in N Ireland without this facility.

ACCOMMODATION With extended screening, accommodation at all assessment clinics is being reviewed. The Northern Board have opened new facilities with the Western Board due to move this Autumn. The Southern Board will have facilities at the new oncology centre at Craigavon. The Eastern Board remains a problem. The facility at Linenhall Street requires the transfer of the Family Planning Unit and redevelopment of the ground floor. Plans are underway and funding will require to be identified.

Dr G Crothers



NI Screening Programmes

Follow-up from the Scottish QA Visit

Each of the 4 screening units had an external QA visit from a representative Scottish team in September 2000. It was an action-packed 2 day schedule, which thankfully all went to plan.

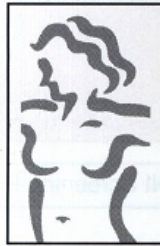
The official report has now been received and the QARC are following up the recommendations through the regional advisory sub-groups.

A Current Literature Update for the NHS Cancer Screening Programme is available from the QARC library.

If you would like to receive a regular copy of this newsletter or submit an article, please contact Ruth at the following address:

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The NHS Cancer Screening Programmes
website address is:
www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk



STATISTICS

Uptake for year ending 31 March 2000

	Number Invited	Number Screened	Uptake Rate	Recall Rate
EHSSB	19,001	13,149	69.2%	3.7%
NHSSB	11,105	8,944	80.5%	3.2%
SHSSB	8,553	6,170	72.1%	3.2%
WHSSB	6,999	5,321	76.0%	4.2%
NI	45,658	33,584	73.6%	3.6%

Establishment of the Quality Assurance Reference Centre (QARC)

The NI QARC was established in August 2000. It is based on the 4th floor of Champion House. Dr Philip Donaghy is Regional QA Co-Ordinator and has a staff of 5:

Mr Kevin Briggs (Information Officer – Cervical Screening)
Mrs Ruth Greenlees (Information Officer – Breast Screening)
Mrs Margaret McManus (QA Secretary)
Mrs Joan McSorley (P/T Administration)
Mrs Jacqui Murphy (QA Administrator/Co-Ordinator)

The key functions of the QARC are:

- To service the QA Committee and its various sub groups.
- To collect, verify and distribute all data as required by professional, regional and national bodies.
- To provide a central information point for screening activities and act as a first point of enquiry.
- To plan and co-ordinate the formal QA visits and ensure that appropriate follow up action is taken.

Regional Mammography Study Day

The Northern Ireland Regional Study Day for all radiographers involved in Mammography was held on Thursday 31 May 2001 at the Dunadry Hotel and Country Club.

This meeting is held every two years and is an opportunity for all radiographers who are involved in Mammography to listen to lectures, keep up to date with current practice and to become involved in debates about the way ahead for the profession.

There were fifty delegates who represented the Breast Screening Programme, and radiographers working in symptomatic units in both the public and private sector.

Lectures included topics such as:

- Digital Mammography
- Digital Mammography – Clinical Experience
- Radiographers in a Counselling Role
- Extended roles for Radiographers
- Current Mammographic issues
- Mammography film reading for Radiographers

Speakers were from radiological, radiographic, nursing and medical physics backgrounds.

The feedback from the participants was extremely positive. A certificate of attendance and copy of hand-outs of all the lecture notes was sent to delegates, who produced an appropriate reflective report.

In conclusion, it was an extremely worthwhile and enjoyable forum which provided an excellent opportunity for all mammographers in the region to meet and exchange information.

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Cervical

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A Welcome from the Regional QA Director

Welcome to the first issue of what I hope will become a regular Newsletter from the Quality Assurance Reference Centre. Amongst the aims of publishing this newsletter is first and foremost to improve our communication and increase awareness of how the Programme is made up, where we are located and what we are endeavouring to achieve. It is also planned to provide a forum which groups and individuals can use as a means of publicising educational events, audits, research, exchanging information etc.

I hope you will find this concept of value. We at the QARC would welcome comments and contributions from anyone with an interest in Cervical Screening issues.

Dr Linda Caughley

STATISTICS

Coverage for 5 year period ending 31 March 2000

	Eligible Population	Coverage	Percentage
EHSSB	173,148	114,582	66.17%
NHSSB	105,594	78,503	74.34%
SHSSB	77,405	55,141	71.24%
WHSSB	74,927	50,691	67.65%
NI	431,074	298,917	69.34%



NI Screening Programmes



If you would like to receive a regular copy of this newsletter or submit an article please contact:

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A fact sheet detailing statistics on uptake and coverage for both Breast and Cervical Screening can be obtained by contacting either Kevin or Ruth at the QARC.



AT A GLANCE

Following the controversy in the media with the death from Cervical Cancer of Alma Halliwell in Granada TV's Coronation Street, a briefing note was sent to staff within the NHS Cervical Screening Programme as it became apparent that many clinics and laboratories were receiving calls from concerned women and the local press. The NHS Cervical Screening Programme drafted an 'At a Glance factsheet' to help staff respond to such queries. The factsheet details the Effectiveness of the Programme nationwide, Uptake rates in England, Incidence and Mortality figures for Cervical Cancer and Risk Factors.

Anyone wishing to obtain a copy of the 'At a Glance factsheet' should contact Kevin at the QARC.

PUBLIC INFORMATION SUB-GROUP FOR CERVICAL SCREENING

In April 2000, a group was established, as a sub-group of the Regional Advisory Group for Cervical Screening, to revise the existing invitation letters and leaflets available to women in the cervical screening programme. The group was also given the task to consider the need to develop new letters for use by the screening programme in the form of a letter library.

This information will be incorporated into the Guide for GP's and Smear Takers, and will contain the revised invitation letters and a series of results letters for smear takers to adapt and use within their practice, as well as revised versions of the existing leaflets on cervical screening and colposcopy and a new leaflet developed for women who have abnormal smears.

The new leaflets will be launched at the Cervical Screening Awareness Day on 21 November 2001.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN COLPOSCOPY?

A Regional Colposcopy Audit was carried out in Northern Ireland throughout the period Oct 1999 – Sept 2000. A report was published and findings were presented to colposcopists and those with an interest in this line of work in the Seagoe Hotel on 31st May 2001. A number of recommendations were made in this report including the setting up of a regional colposcopy quality assurance group, the development of a standardised proforma for use throughout Northern Ireland and the establishment of a regionally agreed minimum dataset.



A Regional Colposcopy QA group has now been established reporting to the Regional Advisory Committee for Cervical Screening. The group held its first meeting in May 2001 and its first undertaking will be to design a standardised proforma for use throughout the Province and work in conjunction with the ICT group to examine ways of setting up a regionally agreed minimum dataset.

GUIDE FOR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND SMEAR TAKERS

We are currently developing a 'Guide for GP's and Smear Takers'. This, as the name suggests, is an information guide for all healthcare professionals working in Primary Care involved in smear taking.

It will incorporate information regarding the cervical screening programme in an attempt to introduce uniformity throughout each Trust. Areas covered include: the Call and Recall System, Protocols for Smear Taking, Information for Clients, Test Results, Recommended Actions and Subsequent Management.

Following consultation the Guide will be made available in the Spring of 2002.

If you would like further information regarding this please contact:

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